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In This Issue

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Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

There's a common marketing statement that says, "Perception is reality." Under this concept you can be persuaded to buy a certain brand of toothpaste because you perceive yourself being as happy and good-looking as the person in the ad. They hope we won't really think this through, because we all know the toothpaste won't result in the happiness you see on TV.

Perception is reality only for people who think big thoughts without doing the hard work necessary to reach big goals.

Angie and I are project people. In our short 22 years of marriage we've built three houses and extensively remodeled a couple more. At some step in each project I'd find our perception challenged by the reality of the moment and have to figure out the most logical way to proceed. Our perception (vision) of what we actually intended to accomplish had to be modified.

Our house building days are behind us now, but our passion for projects lives on with our new responsibility to the readers of Dulcimer Players News.

The task at hand raises familiar questions: What tools should we use? What will be the purpose of each room? Can we afford to make it larger, and if so can we afford the maintenance? What colors should we use? Can we afford higher quality building materials? The list goes on.

Our first DPN issue was a crash course in magazine production. We added a few rooms and remodeled just about every page. Some of our design ideas worked better than others and we went to press about two weeks later than planned. I'll confess now that I was uncertain whether we'd be able to pull off the logistics and added expense of including a CD in the last issue but everyone worked together and made it happen. Our vision is now to keep the sampler CD as a regular bonus to DPN subscribers.

Please support the artists on the CD by purchasing their music and attending festivals.

Reader response to the February issue was overwhelmingly positive and it was exciting to see so many letters and emails begin with the single word "wow."

We heard from quite a few people who felt the upgrade to glossy paper combined with grey background images in some of the stories made them harder to read. We agree. It was one of those things that we couldn't really discern until we had the magazine in our hands.

One of the advantages of glossy paper is that ink doesn't 'bleed' as much, rendering sharper text and photographs. The disadvantage is too much glare in bright light. The paper you have in your hands now should yield the best of both worlds. It's a higher-quality paper called Corniche, which has a satin finish and is acid-free. Acid-free paper doesn't yellow as easily as lesser-grade paper. Please let us know what you think.

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For the environmentally conscious among us we're proud to announce that the Iowa Soybean Association has approved the ink we use as containing 20% or greater soybean content.

Thank you to the writers and editors who make Dulcimer Players News great! DPN

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Reader Response

Keep up the good work. I especially like the articles about performing as I need some hints and encouragement to make this more comfortable for me. I hope to attend a week long workshop this summer for the first time which should be great fun and boost my confidence, I hope. Meanwhile, I am having fun strumming and picking away!!! N. S.

The "new" magazine is very good - different from Maddie's good work, but different - as it should be.

I'm sitting here listening to the CD! It is delightful; what a treat on such a cold & snowy winter's day! The magazine is so professional with high quality print, paper, and photos. *-C. T.*

Wow! You sure have changed the appearance of DPN. Some of it is great and some needs more help. The use of color makes the issue more attractive and the location of all of the "new" items (Neal's col.) close together makes it easier to find new items of interest.

However, we have two suggestions as you fine tune the new DPN. First is the use of excess color. Specifically the use of so many shades of gray and multiple tones with text overlays. The darker shades and the variegated shades make the text difficult to read. Try to keep the shades lighter, with only one color tone or maybe (better yet) keep the design elements away from under the text. Perhaps, if you really want to keep both the darker shades and variegated design shades under the text you could find a font that would make the text easier to read.

Secondly, we, for one, and maybe lots of others, seek out events (festivals, etc.) by location not date. Please try to arrange the events by geography (alphabetical by state?) or at the very least use an emphatic type face on the city and state so we don't have to plow through the whole list with the chance of missing what we are looking for. *-J. S.*

[Great suggestions. See the Editor's Desk on page 1 and the new Festival Listing on page 60]

GREAT Issue! You have done a fabulous job on the old girl. I love the bigger magazine, more articles in proportion to the ads, everything about it. The CD was a wonderful bonus. Now of course, here is my two cents worth. Are you planning on posting a tune or two off the CD per issue? *G.S.*

[Yes, see Editor's Note, page 40]

The Feb. DPN arrived in the mail late yesterday and I sat down and read it cover to cover—what a treat! From the fabulous cover through luthiers and quick-picks and Steve Schneider's neat article (and everything in between), to the great CD, I am delighted with this DPN. Congratulations on your 'first' edition and keep up the good work! *-L. H.*

We Welcome Your Feedback

Address correspondence to:
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Dulcimer Players News
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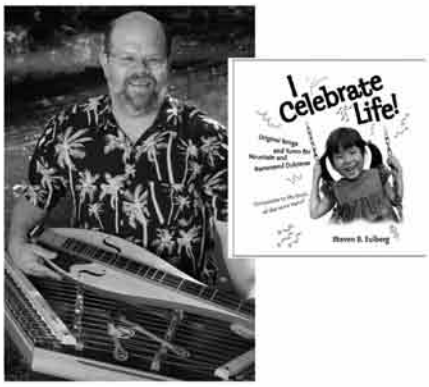

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Letters

Congratulations on a great isssue! Loved the addition of the CD. *-J. E.*

Your wonderful sampler CD is playing on my PC as I write this email. The changes to DPN are somewhat startling to someone who's subscribed since the mid-80's—I have copies of all issues ever published! But what you've done is really quite wonderful, and a fitting tribute to Maddie's many years of publishing a great magazine. I'll continue to look forward the every issue. *-C. B.*

The "new" magazine is very good—different from Maddie's good work but different—as it should be. I hope that Ralph Lee Smith will write occasional columns even though he is no longer listed on the masthead. And I hope that Maddie will write an occasional column in addition to her performing and teaching.

Listening to the included disc gave me the feeling of a summer dulcimer festival. Great! And I had just finished shoveling snow from the driveway! *-E. T.*

The look and the feel of the new DPN bring the magazine up multiple notches. Thank you for giving the dulcimer community a shining star! It was wonderful, it is now stupendous! *-C. C.*

The February issue of DPN is mostly great. There are lots of novel additions to what has been a very good magazine. I particularly have enjoyed the CD; thanks!

Whoa!! I always anticipate the DPN arriving and get so excited just reading it. When I received my DPN last week I couldn't even open it because I was looking for everyone I knew on the cover.

Thank you for giving the dulcimer community a shining star! It was wonderful, it is now stupendous!

The magazine and CD were great. What a great idea. I've already read it three times and find something I've missed each time. You did an outstanding job!! *-L. O.*

WOW! I just finished reading the February issue of "Dulcimer Players News," cover to cover, and I am really impressed with the new look and format. You and your staff did a terrific job. It was also such a nice surprise to receive the sampler music CD, which I listened to yesterday, and it is really superb! What a great idea, and it was so wonderful to be able to hear the people that were described in the magazine. Thank you so much for sending it and for the great new look. I love the full color, the two page list of upcoming festivals, etc. and all the rest. I have been a subscriber for at least 7 years, and will certainly be continuing.

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"What's the Dulcimer of Your Dreams?"

Putting all brand loyalties and financial considerations aside (and probably some laws of physics also), **my dream mountain dulcimer** would be loud enough to play in a small jam (of other instruments) without having to beat on it. It would have a light and easy action. One side would be higher than the other, so to have a nice comfortable angle when in my lap. I'm not one for a lot of frets, but an "F" would be nice (when in a "D" tuning); how about a 4½ fret instead of the 1½?

Good luck with the DPN,
-Larry Spencer

My dream hammered dulcimer? That's easy! I would love to have the sound and beauty of my Jerry Read Smith (3½ Octave Chromatic) combined with the feature of staying in tune like my James Jones (3/13/12). I would like this dream instrument to weigh less than 12 pounds. And since I am dreaming I would love a hard case with wheels that could be regulation checked baggage… a nice HD suitcase.
-Gail Raymaker

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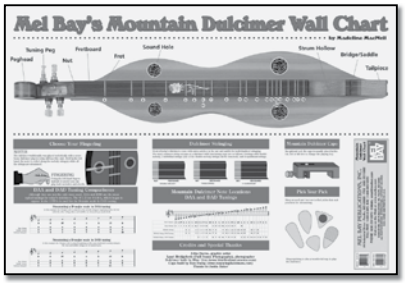
Mountain Dulcimer Wall Chart



- Note locations on the fretboard for both DAA and DAD tunings, and a comparison of DAA and DAD.
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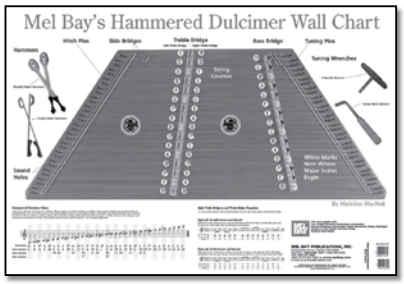

- A detailed picture of the instrument with bridges, string courses and notes clearly outlined.
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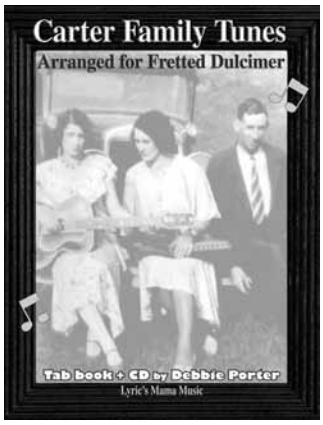

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Tales and Traditions

by Ralph Lee Smith

Swedish Folk Zithers in the United States

Beatrice Hole

The photo to the left provides a vivid reminder of the presence in the United States of many types of Northern European fretted zithers in addition to the scheitholt.

The picture is from a flyer which read:

Beatrice Hole of Eden Prairie plays a rare one-stringed musical instrument called the "Psalmodikon". This instrument originated in the Scandinavian countries about 1820 and was used by small church groups and schools to lead in singing.

Beatrice is proud of her Norwegian heritage and enjoys telling about her customs at many public functions, keeping alive the traditions of our Scandinavian culture.

Salamonicum belonging to Richard Matteson, College Park, Maryland

If we know less than we would like to know about the fretted dulcimer, and less still about the scheitholt, we are somewhere near the beginning in gathering information about these other instruments. I hope that Beatrice Hole's flyer will get us all going!

I cannot remember how the flyer entered my files, and I do not know how old it is. For sure, it is not recent. A call to a phone number on the flyer produced a message that the number was disconnected. I will persevere in efforts to locate Beatrice, and will report in this column on any success that I have.

Norwegian and Swedish Heritages

The flyer indicates that the "psalmodikon" she is playing is part of her Norwegian heritage. This type of instrument apparently has a tradition in both Norway and Sweden, especially in the latter country. The other two images on this page are of a Swedish instrument called a "salamonicum," owned by Richard Matteson, a retired University professor of College Park, Maryland. Like Beatrice's psalmodikon, it has one string only. Beatrice's instrument, which is probably of recent construction, has musical instrument frets. Richard's salamonicum has wooden frets, formed by a series of peaks and valleys cut into the fretboard. There is a single tuning peg at the foot.

Richard's instrument, which dates to about the 1840s, comes from Bishop Hill Colony in Illinois, which was established by Swedish immigrants in the mid-1840s. Richard's grandfather, Franklin Lewis Matteson, born in Sweden about 1844, came to Bishop Hill with his family when he was about 10 years old. Franklin's son, Maurice Matteson, a musician and folklorist, became Chairman of the Music Department of the University of South Carolina. He made a number of visits to Bishop Hill, and in 1943, Jonas Bergren, a resident of Bishop Hill and a musical instrument collector, gave the salamonicum to Maurice. From Maurice, it passed to his son, Richard. Additional information about this instrument will appear in a future DPN column.

News From Delaware

The picture on the next page was sent to me by Bob Scott of Wilmington, Delaware, along with a copy of the March 2000 issue of the Newsletter of the New Sweden Centre, Kalmar Nyckel Museum Institute, in Wilmington. New Sweden, on the Delaware River, was the site of the first Swedish settlement in America. Bob marked

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an article entitled, "Early Colonial Musical Instrument, 'Psalmodium,' is donated to N.S. Centre." The text reads,

> "In the early churches of New Sweden, there was no piano or organ to sing hymns. The colonists were quite original and crafted a musical instrument that became known as a 'psalmodium.' Such a musical type is not known today in Sweden, according to the nyckelharpa world champion, Peter Hedlund, from the Swedish Academy of Music in Stockholm. N.S.C. Director, Christina Lassen, who is a descendant of the colony, has donated a family-owned psalmodium to our collections. More like a dulcimer than a nyckelharpa, it is rectangular with five catgut strings over a curved sounding board. Don Callender has restored it, and Curator Mackenzie is making five reproduction pegs; only one survived as it passed down over time."

This picture shows the instrument with "trial reproduction bridge and pegs" installed, with two tuning pegs at one end and three at the other. The single remaining old peg is lying next to the ruler, and the light color of the trial bridge clearly shows the curvature of the instrument's top. The instrument is not fretted.

Bob writes, "After this article [in the Newsletter] went to press, Mr. Mackenzie got a newsletter from a Swedish culture group in the Southwest with pictures of three 'psalmodikons' (if I remember their Swedish spelling). Two of them had only one string, and that was fretted. The picture of the third was indistinct; it apparently had several strings, some fretted, and horizontal tuning pegs."

To top it off, I recently exchanged emails with Nils Caspersson, an American of Swedish descent, who has seen instruments in Swedish museums that strongly resemble a scheitholt/dulcimer in my collection from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. Nils believes that the dulcimer may have developed, not from the scheitholt, but from Swedish fretted zithers. I replied that I don't think so, because of the simultaneous presence of scheitholts and early dulcimers along the long trail of migration from Pennsylvania to the old frontier, and the presence of scheitholt-style features on many old dulcimers. But, as I also said to him, there may be something Swedish in the stew somewhere!

We have plenty to learn. DPN

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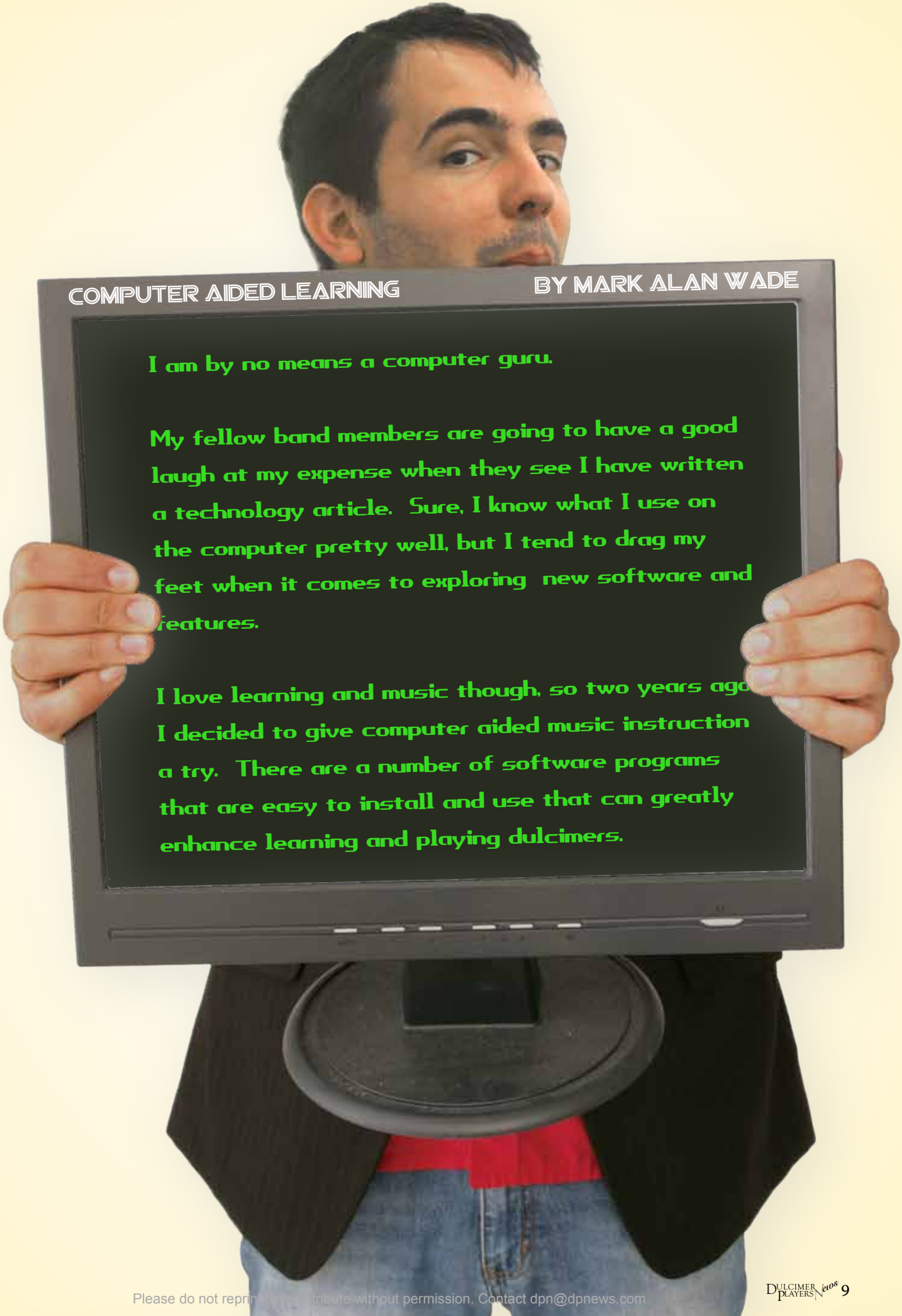

COMPUTER AIDED LEARNING

BY MARK ALAN WADE

I am by no means a computer guru.

My fellow band members are going to have a good laugh at my expense when they see I have written a technology article. Sure, I know what I use on the computer pretty well, but I tend to drag my feet when it comes to exploring new software and features.

I love learning and music though, so two years ago I decided to give computer aided music instruction a try. There are a number of software programs that are easy to install and use that can greatly enhance learning and playing dulcimers.

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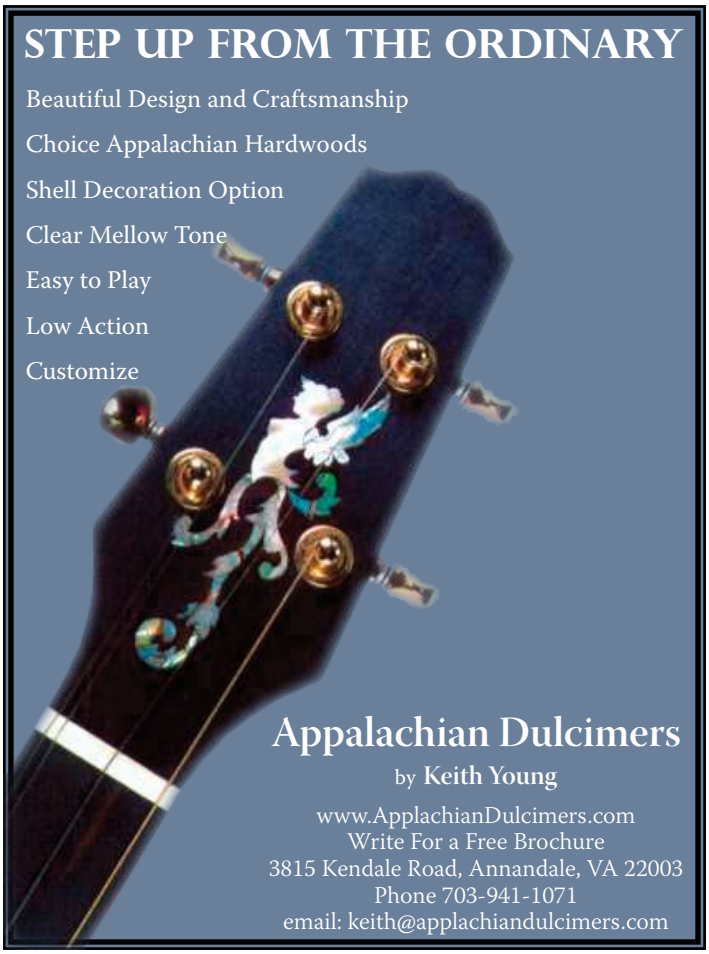
Computer Aided Learning

by Mark Alan Wade

As a musician, it's easy to be like a block of Swiss cheese with holes in your skill set

...like inadequate aural skills (inability to play by ear), confusion over music theory, flawed technique, and musical illiteracy. As a private teacher, I am faced with the seemingly insurmountable task of filling all these holes with knowledge and skills in only 30 minutes a week!

It takes a careful balance of all these important ingredients to produce a well-rounded musician. To improve the balancing act in my teaching, I began using various software programs to enhance what I was already doing. Now each student works in my computer lab for thirty minutes in addition to their traditional one-on-one lesson with me.



The results have been outstanding!

Literacy has improved. Aural skills are up. Student retention is higher because learning the most difficult areas of ear-training, literacy, and music theory are fun, allowing me to focus more on musicality and technique in one-on-one sessions. The transformation that I see and hear in my students has been so exciting that I am eager to share it with the dulcimer community.

As I said, I am no computer expert. These programs are simple to use, easy to install, and for the most part, inexpensive.

In general, a cheap pair of headphones or computer speakers is all you need to get started. Laptop computers are great because of their portability. Whether you are working with a private teacher or on your own, integrating these programs will augment your progress in music.

Ear-Training 101

Piano Lessons Unlimited (Mac/Win)
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Free download or $9.95 full version

Summary: This program is great for improving "relative" pitch, or simply put: your ability to hear the distances from one note to the next. This important skill is critical for the ability to play by ear. In fact, it is so important that universities require all music majors to take courses in aural skills, much in the format of this free "game."

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The layout for **Ear-Training 101** is a piano keyboard. This helps give visual cues as pitches are laid out from low to high. Your job is to click on the note of the keyboard of unknown notes after the game gives you the first note. There are 22 levels in the full version. An added bonus in this game is the chord mode, where the two pitches are played simultaneously and the highest pitch is marked with a "1." Your task is to hear and select the lower pitch.

I use this with my students for the first five minutes of their computer time. Although it is an integral part of their music education, it is best used in short doses. It helps to record your scores, levels and dates to watch as your scores go up. Everyone can improve in this area, and this game is a great way to systematically develop your ears.

Band-in-a-Box

PG Music (Mac/Win)
www.band-in-a-box.com
$99

Summary: Of all the programs mentioned, this one is the only one to address ensemble skills - the ability to play in a group. As the name suggests, this program is a software-based "band" accompaniment tool. Simply fill the blank measures with the chord changes, select your tempo and number of repeats and you are ready to play! Don't know your

In Band-in-a-Box, you fill in the chord changes, pick a musical style and play along with the band.

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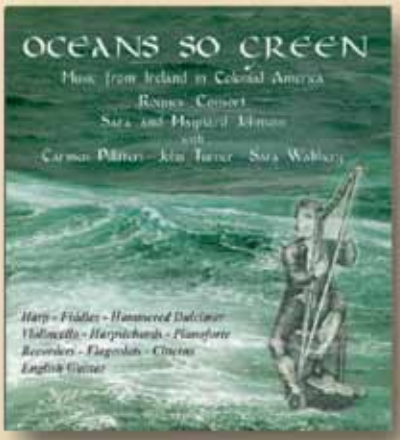

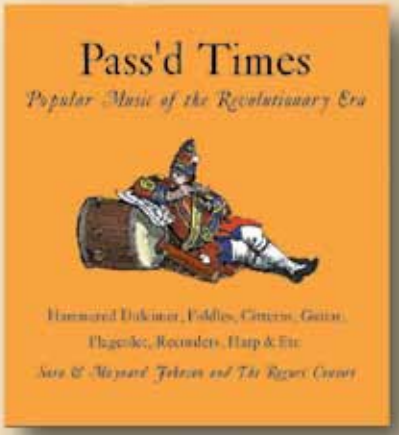

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chords? You can easily get them from your favorite fake book. The real beauty of this program is its flexibility in styles. Without re-entering your chords, you can switch your "band" from bluegrass to Texas swing, to folk guitars, to waltzes, to funk, rock and R&B. The basic styles that come with it are perfect for most needs, but additional "style packs" are available for an additional charge; i.e., "Bluegrass Style Pack."

Choosing **Band-in-a-Box** styles can be the most difficult step, but simple trial and error will help you find the style you want. Fortunately, the styles are divided into groups for easy selection.

Band-in-a-Box operates much like a CD player. When you press play, it taps out two bars so you know when to jump in. My students learn one song per month on their own and get together once every quarter to jam. Most students have this program now and I send them the files to whatever tunes we are working on.

This program is also great if your computer is not close to your dulcimer because you can burn your accompaniments to a CD. Then you can play them on your home stereo, your CD player or iPod.

After mentioning the overwhelming pros of this program, I should mention that it isn't as user-friendly as the other programs. Frankly, the user interface layout is ugly and somewhat clumsy. The 200-page or so user manual is quite intimidating. Another item of confusion is the two platforms' differing version

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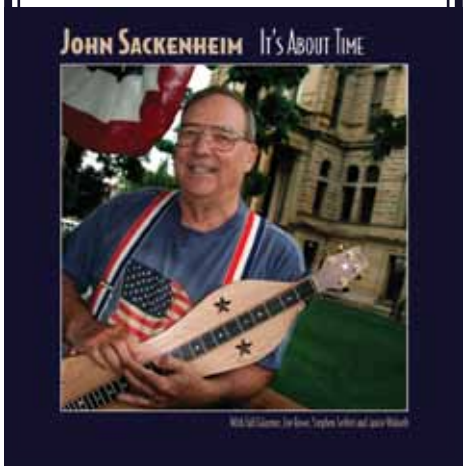

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names: Version 12 for OS X, and 2007 for Windows. The program is capable of doing much, much more than I describe here, but for the most part, the average user will not need to get into all that. Every day fiddle tunes, for example, are a cinch.

Music Ace Deluxe

Harmonic Vision (Mac/Win)
www.harmonicvision.com
$79.95

Summary: This program is a comprehensive curriculum for the basics of music. It has lessons and games for all aspects of musicianship: tempo, steady beat, counting rhythms, notes, symbols, terms, ear-training, key signatures, time signatures, chords, etc. It definitely has an emphasis on helping a rank beginner learn to read music, but it also has excellent lessons and games for aural skills and rhythm. This course assumes you know nothing about reading music and very thoroughly takes you through 48 lessons and games. Each lesson presents new ideas and engages students in review exercises. Following each lesson, the student practices and applies each new concept in clever exercises and activities.

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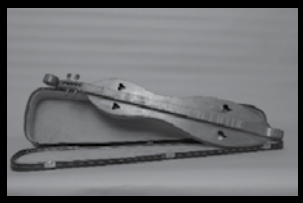

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Music Ace Deluxe is especially great for children because of the fun nature in which the information is presented and reviewed. It is also great for adults because of the thoroughness of the content, even if it is a little playful in its delivery.

Alfred's Essentials of Music Theory

Alfred (Mac/Win)
www.alfred.com
$59.95

Summary: Similar in content to **Music Ace Deluxe**, this program (Student Version 2.0) also assumes the student does not (yet) read music in its opening lessons. It very methodically takes the student through lessons using narration, animated examples and clickable elements for aural reinforcement. It also includes randomized exercises, ear training and review answers.

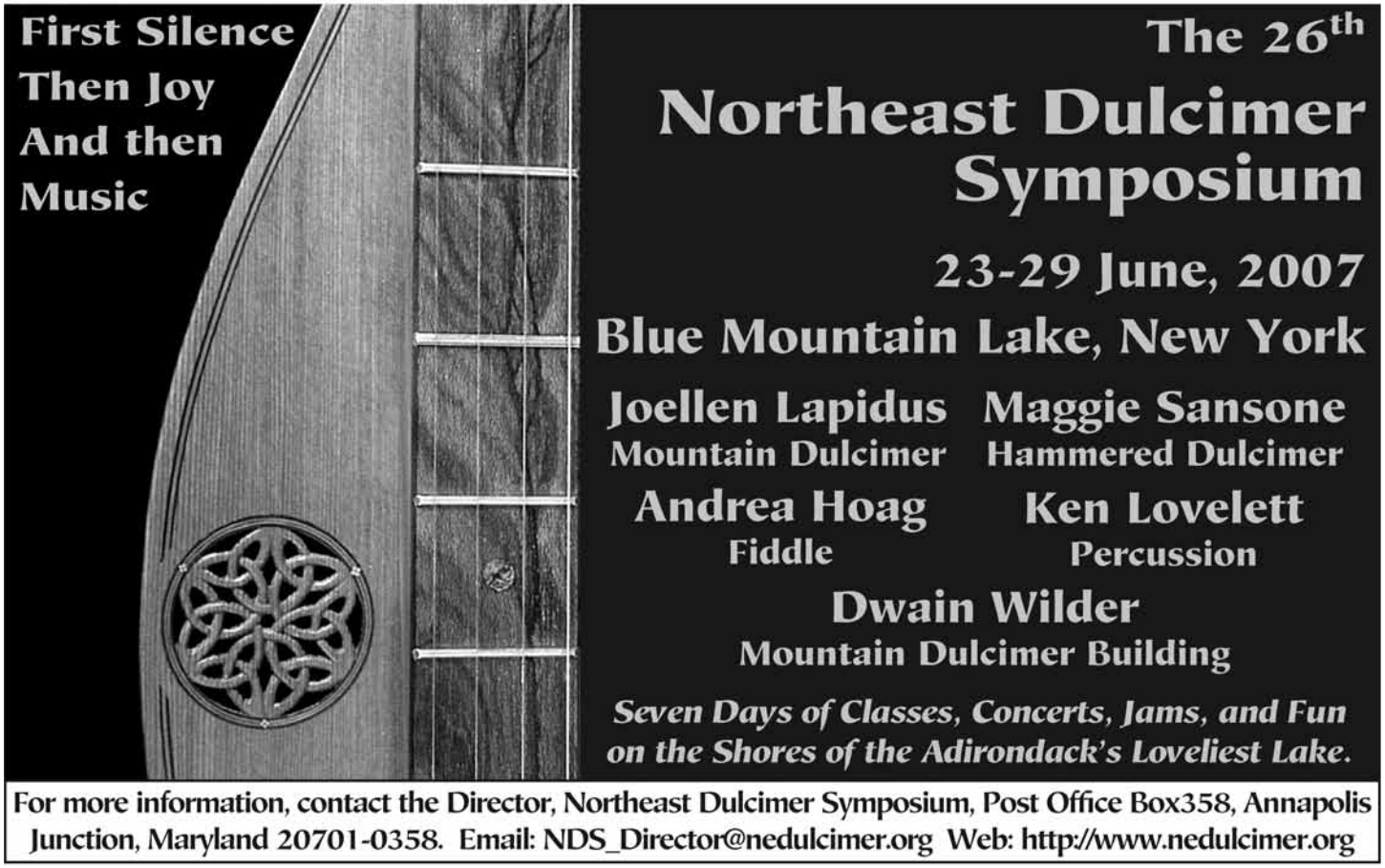
Alfred's has a little less "song and dance" than **Music Ace**, and many of my adult students prefer working with it, even though the content is much the same. Either program has plenty to offer both young and old.

Finale Notepad

Finale (Mac/Win)
www.finalemusic.com/notepad
Free download

Summary: Music is perhaps the only language that students are too often taught to read and not write. One of the best ways to learn to read music is to practice writing it. This program allows you to do that at no cost. With this free program, transcribing music into printable standard notation is as easy as clicking on the kind of note you want and clicking on the staff of the pitch you want. Playback is as easy as using a CD player.

As a teaching tool, I use this program with my students by giving them a simple melody to play by ear every week, like *Amazing Grace*. Their task is not only to play it, but to write the letter names of the notes they play above the lyrics. When they come back the following week, I check their letter names, and the next week's assignment is to enter it into standard notation using **Finale Notepad**. This is enormously successful as ear-training, reading, writing and music theory all go hand in hand. Students can email me their work if they get stuck, and after several lessons, they build a portfolio of their compositions.



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This program is great for everyday use too. You can write out your own songs, add lyrics and chord changes, and play back to check your work. It's great to make handouts for workshops, or to share your version of a tune with a group.

Learning **Finale Notepad** will also give you a good start toward understanding the full version, **Finale**.

Finale

Finale (Mac/Win)
www.finalemusic.com
$499—theological and student discounts available

Summary: This is the parent program to the free **Finale Notepad**. It is a massive program in cost, functionality, and hardware requirements (needing 1 GB of RAM, minimum). This is one of two programs used by professional composers and arrangers. I have used it since the late '90s and it is easy for me to forget how complex the learning curve is for beginners. Because it is so thorough, it takes a long time to really get a grasp on all the features. That said, you can do some amazing time-saving tricks

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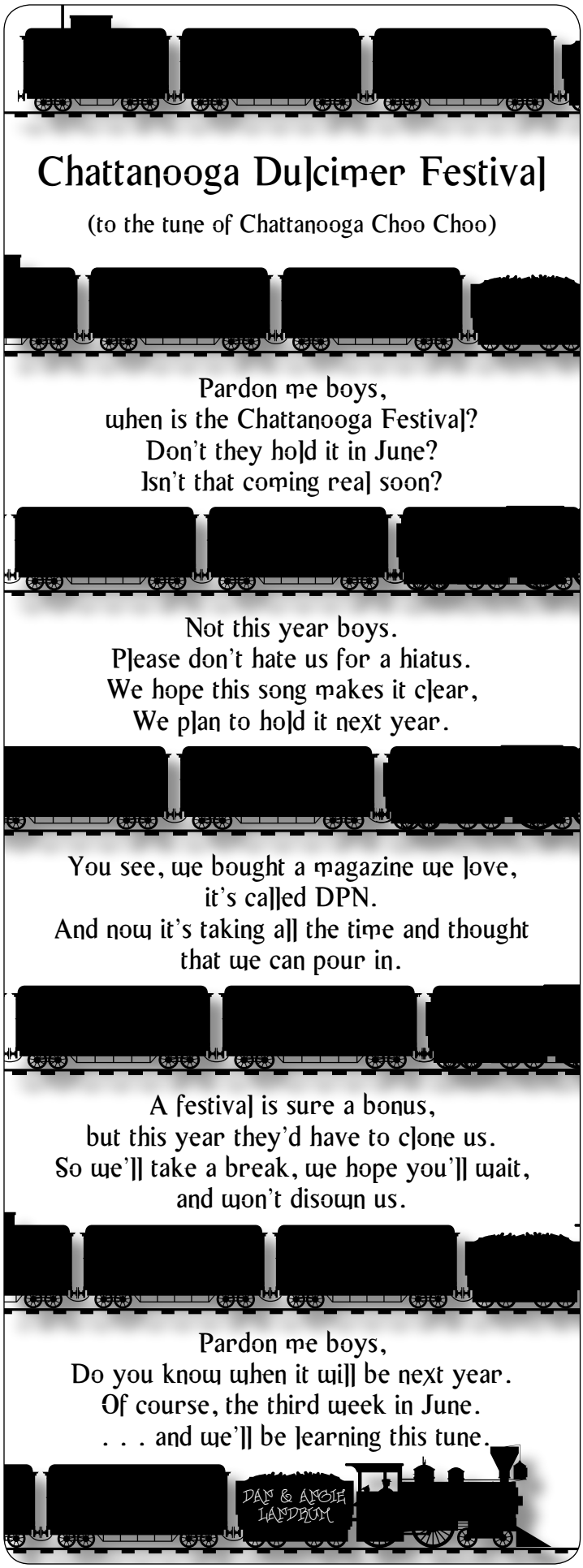

with **Finale**. You can scan a song into your computer using your desktop scanner and transfer the scan directly into music notation in **Finale** (with a bit of formatting to make it look right on the page). Once in **Finale**, you can personalize the tune with embellishments, add chord symbols above for guitar and bass, or add lyrics.

Using this program, you can print professional music documents, and create MIDI files and audio files of your music. The playback is amazing as the software uses recordings of real musicians (known as sampling); hence, the large memory requirement. It even has human playback features which makes it seem like real musicians are playing your piece. You can even turn your songs into files that you can play along with using **Smart Music**.

Smart Music

Smart Music (Mac/Win)
www.smartmusic.com
$9.95 per month or $100 per year
Student discounts available

Summary: Smart Music is another software-based accompanist program. Unlike **Band-In-A-Box** where the user creates the songs to be played by entering the chords, tempo, and style, **Smart Music** has a library of 30,000 published songs (and counting). It is intended for "classical" instruments in band or orchestra. I started using it with my trumpet students; however, using the violin series of the Suzuki method, dulcimer students can enjoy a treasure of great music with fun accompaniments. The "smart" aspect of the titles is that your computer's microphone picks up the sound of the student and adjusts when the human performer wants to push ahead or pull back in tempo. You can turn this feature off if you are working on keeping a steady beat. The violin books work so well because dulcimers read the same treble clef, do not transpose, and prefer the same keys (mostly in A, G and D). DPN

Mark Wade lives in Columbus, Ohio, where he is finishing his Doctorate of Musical Arts degree at Ohio State University, and teaches trumpet at Denison University. A National Hammered Dulcimer Champion, Mark maintains a private studio of 35+ students who include the 2004 National champ, David Mahler, and the 2005 & 2006 3rd Place winner, Stephen Humphries. For more info, see markalanwade.com.

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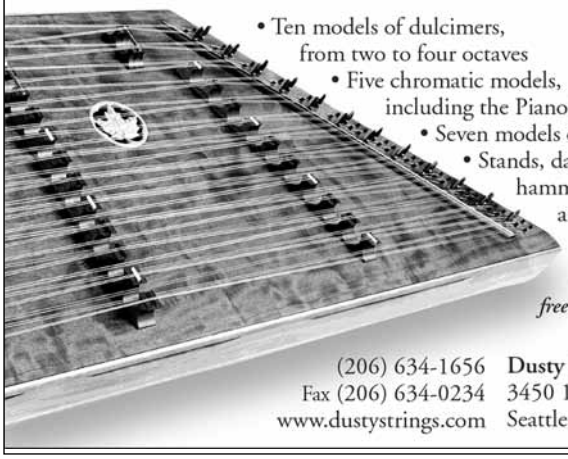

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by Sam Edelston

Building a Magical Dulcimer Community for a Day and a Half

We held the first Nutmeg Dulcimer Festival in the fall of 2004. When our newly assembled team (Britt Goodman, Deborah Justice, Steve Miklos, and I) planned it, beginning in late 2003, we talked it through in great detail.

Heidi & John Cerrigione leading the Slow Jam.

While none of us had ever run a folk festival before, we all were musicians and had attended many other festivals. We drew on our own experiences and the best advice of numerous others.

Underneath it all, as I see it, we aim to create a magical dulcimer community for a day and a half.

Dulcimer players want to get together. Today, at least in my part of the country, we're rare enough that dulcimers create a common bond among us. It's a great relief to be in a place where you can talk to people about dulcimers without having to explain to people what one is. A fair percentage of Nutmeg's attendees drive 100-200 miles to get there. (Thank you!) So, they're predisposed toward community.

Create a great program. This is one of my jobs. We only have three featured performers a year, so we have to choose great ones. I aim to create a workshop schedule that will attract both traditional and contemporary players, of all levels. My biggest challenge is to make our Advanced track enticing for players who have "seen it all before." In the long run, I hope people will want to register because it's Nutmeg, even before they know who the performers will be.

Make it great for the beginners, because they are the future. We have beginner-oriented workshops all day, too. It wasn't all-day our first year, and they got bored.

We have workshops on non-dulcimer subjects, too. Singing, music theory, guitar, other instruments, formal jams, round-robins. This gives players an alternative if a particular dulcimer workshop doesn't appeal to them. It also encourages people to bring their non-dulcimer spouses.

Know your audience. Observe what's working and what's not. I look in on the workshops, to count heads and read the body language. We do a post-festival survey every year, which has given us ways to improve. And we go to other festivals, where we are the audience.

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Bennett Hammond on guitar, George Stavis on banjo, Dan Landrum on hammered dulcimer, and Robert Force on mountain dulcimer in the finale.

Care. I think this is most evident in our one-on-one pre-festival correspondence and conversations with people, or if ever something goes wrong at the festival. Little things mean a lot. We want things to be right for people. It's hard to fake caring.

Seize opportunities to create magic. I want our attendees to have great experiences that they couldn't have anticipated. That could range from connecting with a like-minded musician, to something great happening in a workshop or concert. My favorite is to create special moments. At Nutmeg 2006, we had two awesome Saturday night featured artists: Robert Force and Dan Landrum. At every mountain/hammered dulcimer concert I've ever attended, the hammered dulcimer has been the closer. But in this case, Robert was going to invite a hot banjo player to join him for a couple of numbers, and then he was going to bring additional people up for his finale—"the more, the merrier." On a hunch, we decided to reverse the traditional order, let Dan wow the audience in the first half, and let Robert create a great shared experience in the second half. The audience had an amazing concert.

You can't do it alone. It's too much work. Nutmeg's core team today includes Britt Goodman, Chuck Scheffreen, Jacquie Bartlett, John Cuyler, and Steve Miklos. I may be Nutmeg's public face, but they make a lot of things work. We get input from numerous friends within the dulcimer and folk community. We have been blessed with volunteers who have given their time to make the festival run smoothly.

Our 4th annual Nutmeg Dulcimer Festival will be Friday-Saturday, September 28-29, 2007, in Hamden, Connecticut. We're working to make our community even bigger and more magical this year. DPN

Sam Edelston is chair of the Nutmeg Dulcimer Festival. www.Nutmeg-Dulcimer.com In addition to hammered and mountain dulcimer, he plays guitar, banjo, and chess. SamHD@OptOnline.net

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Community: Meadville, PA

by Carolyn Y. Turnbull

Across the Generations

West End Elementary School is situated in the center of 40 acres of former dairy pasture fields in rural northwestern Pennsylvania. Stepping through one of the front glass doors on any late Wednesday afternoon, one might hear the sounds of *Give Me the Roses* or *Morning Has Broken* harmoniously drifting down the hall from the music room. Is it really mountain dulcimers, autoharps, guitars, fiddles, a string bass, a simple limberjack and maybe a washboard or two I hear? Are those parents and grandparents standing in the hall waiting for their youngsters to finish folk band practice? Are they

Is it really mountain dulcimers, autoharps, guitars, a string bass, a simple limberjack and maybe a washboard or two I hear?

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really listening and hearing the next generation of youngsters playing songs that they once learned in their own childhood?

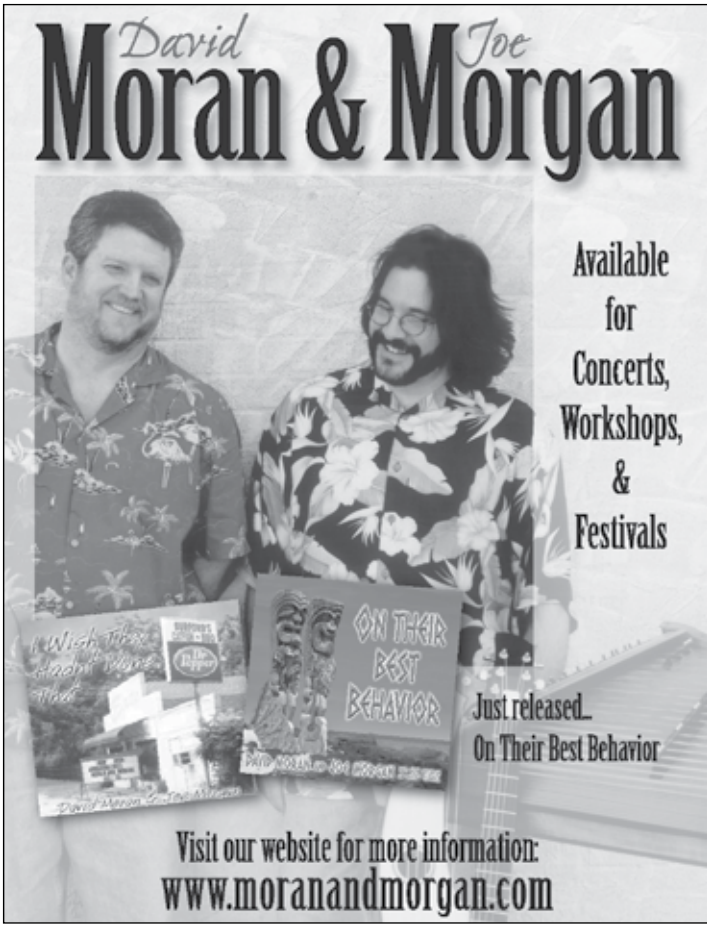
Serving a population of nearly 500 students, kindergarten through sixth grade, West End Elementary opened its doors nearly 20 years ago and has constantly enjoyed the support of parents, grandparents, extended family and the community. Concerts are always "standing room only" with the parking lot jammed to capacity and more cars packed along both sides of the two blacktop roads leading to the school. It's a well known fact to anybody wanting to attend these events, "You have to be there nearly an hour early to get a parking space near the school and good seat."

While teaching sixth grade, I would occasionally take my mountain dulcimer to school to teach traditional songs to the students in my three social studies classes. Canadian folk songs and simple Latin American tunes became integrated within my weekly lessons. From *John Canuck* to *Mia Flores*, my sixth graders loved to sing and immediately showed an interest in "that strange instrument" I was playing. "Do you want to try playing it?" I would ask each of my classes. With very little need of encouragement, I always had more than enough youngsters wanting to volunteer to attempt playing while their classmates sang along.

After traveling to a folk music festival at Clarion University of Pennsylvania and attending a couple classes taught by the members of the Canadian group Flapjack, I came bouncing back to West End with an abundance of ideas for adding even more "spark" to my regular classroom lessons. While at this weekend festival, I purchased two of Flapjack's CDs and began playing the songs for my students as they entered social studies class. "Hey! What do you call that type of music? It's neat. Do you know any songs like these we can learn to sing?" I had gotten their attention without even saying one single word.

One day, Mrs. Kipp, a music teacher at our school, stopped me in the hall at the end of the day. She asked me to consider teaching dulcimer after school and to assist her in forming a folk band for the fifth and sixth graders. Since I already played with a small adult group, why not consider starting one for the next generation? With that initial conversation, the West End Folk Band was born.

The following September, the initial practice was scheduled and the group met for the first time where they proudly



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Parents and students were just as excited about the newly formed folk band. Soon I was hearing conversations about how "Grandpa plays the banjo and I never knew this;" "Did you know my Uncle Pete played with a bluegrass band when he was young, Mrs. Turnbull?" "My grandma is so excited about me learning to play the dulcimer. It's one of her favorite instruments and I never even knew what one was before!" Eleven and twelve-year-olds were actually talking to their parents, grandparents,

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and extended family about what was happening in school! How rewarding for any teacher to know students are actively sharing what is happening at school with anybody who will listen.

Mrs. Kipp, along with the support of our very encouraging principal, Mr. John Karns, applied for grants to purchase two dulcimers, two more were purchased the following year by parents. We bought our dulcimers from Don Gardner, a dedicated Ohio builder who generously supported our efforts since the instruments were for school use.

Following two additional workshops with Tull Glazener and Guy George, I was able to bring back even more ideas and techniques to immediately share with The Folksies.

I'm continually amazed at how quickly the youngsters are able to learn traditional songs which take so long for me to master. Their little nimble fingers just glide across the strings with little or no effort while their faces exhibit true delight in their accomplishments.

You might wonder what the favorite songs are of the youngsters (who may be accustomed to listening to rock on their iPods). *You Are My Sunshine* tops the chart since "My grandma always sings that to me" or "You should have seen my Dad's face when I began singing this song at home last week." Of course, *Bile Them Cabbage Down* is a sing-along favorite along with *Wildwood Flower* and *Old Joe Clark*.

While grocery shopping last week, a father of one of my dulcimer players stopped me and shared the following little story. "Have you heard from our Billie Jo over the holidays?" he asked. Without waiting for my response, he continued, "She's so excited. She was given a homemade dulcimer for Christmas by an older gentleman in our family." At first I didn't recognize the younger man, but with the mention of his daughter's name I was able to place his face among the audience at the evening Holiday Concert, the week before Christmas. "She really enjoys playing the dulcimer and has been playing it at home ever since he gave it to her. You know, she even took her dulcimer to church and played there, too. I want to thank you for teaching her how to play. It means so much to all of us."

What else can a teacher ask for? This was an example of a pure and honest compliment… one that truly came from his heart. Taking the time to share your time and talents with children is like dropping a pebble in a brook: one generation, sharing with another, and yet neither ever knowing how or where these ripples will travel in time. DPN

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Community: Huntsville, AL

by Louie Beasley

"All the desks were cluttered with pieces of wood, packs of strings, dozens of clothespins, clamps, glue, and tools."

"The scene looked most confusing."

Linda Berry, 4th Grade Science Teacher at Huntsville's Randolph School, had made arrangements for Pat and Len Corley (from Alpharetta, GA), full-time players, teachers, and builders of mountain dulcimers, to bring pre-cut dulcimer kits to her school and assist her 57 science students in a dulcimer construction project (with the scientific aspects of wood, vibration, sound chambers, strings, levers, etc., provided by Linda). In the process of planning for this event, she enlisted the assistance of Joe Berry and me.

On the morning of October 13th, the exercise began with 19 confused and somewhat bewildered students. With the expert guidance of the Corleys, and some assistance from me and Joe Berry, the effort was underway. Each student did the work on their own dulcimer, with minimum assistance from the adult supervisors. It was most interesting to witness how carefully each student took instruction and stopped to ask for clarification/assistance when they had difficulty with a particular step.

With wood pieces, glue, clamps, clothes pins and determination, the dulcimers began to take shape. I was amazed at how well these 4th graders followed instruction, taking each construction step in proper sequence, and actually producing a playable dulcimer. By lunch time, the first group had completed their dulcimers, installed tuners and strings, and tuned them up for playing. The greatest satisfaction was seeing a student's face when the first string was tight enough to produce a sound. It was a wonderful experience.

This cycle was repeated with the other two classes with the same great results. Then, on the last half of the second day, several teachers and some parents came to the classroom and built their dulcimers. Later, Joe Berry stained all the student dulcimers - each class with a different color. He then built a sturdy rack to facilitate storing all 57 student dulcimers in the classroom.

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"The story does not end with the construction project."

Sylvia Williams (HTMA) has started to teach a dulcimer class for these students, with assistance from Linda Berry and me. I have been in the classroom with these student players, and they are doing really great. During the last session, they were playing harmony and melody parts, and switching parts on cue. In a couple of months, these students will give a short performance at a monthly meeting of the Huntsville Traditional Music Association. DPN

Louie R. Beasley grew up in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia. He enjoys playing guitar, mandolin, autoharp, and his Special Addition mountain dulcimer, built by Bill Neely of Damascus, VA. Louie is an active member of the Athens Alabama Dulcimer Club and the Huntsville Traditional Music Association (www.huntsvillefolk.org).

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Musical Necessity is the Mother of Technical Development

I first heard the title phrase to the left about musical necessity from Bud Zenzen, a fine Michigan cellist and teacher. The phrase strikes me as both eloquent and true, as well as being a perfect argument for studying and learning music that is challenging in any number of ways. Musical necessity refers to the need to learn new skills in order to play music with unfamiliar elements. The premise here is that when you learn something new and different from the familiar, your technique and your musicianship develop. For example, Scott Joplin taught me how to play diminished arpeggios on the hammered dulcimer, simply because they are abundant in some of the rags I play (i.e., *The Easy Winners*). I had never played diminished arpeggios before I played Joplin, and now they are second nature to me.

It's easy to become complacent and to eventually stop evolving on the hammered dulcimer as we reach a level of competence that enables us to "get by" and then to fly at jam sessions and performances and all our various musical interactions. Also, it can be very satisfying to simply stay at our own particular level of accomplishment.

At the same time, however, there are many compelling reasons to continue to learn new approaches on the hammered dulcimer. I'm not suggesting that it is necessary, or even important, for all dulcimer players to continually experience the challenges of musical exploration. However, many of us, at some point in our development, tire of the familiar and the predictable. We yearn to develop a voice on the dulcimer that more closely reflects our particular individuality, so we begin to explore, to search for something different, to find new ways to express ourselves.

The benefits of learning new music on the hammered dulcimer are many and varied, and they all lead us to become better and more fluent musicians. The hammered dulcimer is an instrument that is understood and played according to its own particular (and often peculiar) patterns—and the more you continue learning, the greater the number and complexity of the patterns you acquire.

When we first become acquainted with the hammered dulcimer, many, if not most of us, begin by playing traditional "fiddle tunes" such as *Soldier's Joy* and *Golden Slippers*. There are many reasons why tunes like these are ideally suited vehicles for beginners. Some of these reasons include:

1.	They are in dulcimer-friendly keys, such as D and G. This means that most of the notes are centrally located, follow basic patterns, and are readily accessible;
2.	The range of their notes is relatively limited so there aren't many or any really high or low notes to reach for;
3.	There aren't many or any large interval leaps so that the notes are pretty close together;
4.	There are no or very few accidentals (notes that don't belong in the key and that require a sharp, flat, or natural sign);
5.	They are in simpler meters (2/4, 3/4, 4/4) with relatively simple rhythms;
6.	They follow regular forms and easily understood phrases. For example, both *Soldier's Joy* and *Golden Slippers*, and much of the beginner hammered dulcimer repertoire, are composed of 2 8-measure parts that repeat. This is a great advantage in that the player gets to play each part twice in a row, thus getting to practice it while playing, and also has to learn only 16 measures in order to play a 32-measure piece.

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Hammered Dulcimer Notes

by Steve Schneider

When the music you play no longer excites you, it's time for a change, time to learn something fresh and different from what you've done before. And as you learn, each new tune becomes an exercise to master as it teaches you new patterns and approaches to the instrument. Each new tune is an opportunity to learn something, and, in the right spirit, is a wonderful exercise that, when practiced consciously, results in a varied and ever-growing repertoire for the new and advancing player. In addition, each new tune prepares us for the next one we learn, as our understanding and technique grow with each tune.

I'm assuming that if you play hammered dulcimer, you've already learned at least some Celtic and other "fiddle" tunes. You can certainly stay within that repertoire and continue to learn more and more complex music as you continue to grow, and you can also branch out into other genres and forms of music.

With this in mind, I took a quick look at my music library to find some music books to recommend that might stretch you. The books I chose are not big leaps from fiddle tunes, but they offer different sets of challenges.

You might be ready to delve into English Country Dance Music, a repertoire with a wide range of musical complexity, from the simple to the simply difficult. Flip through a book of English Country Dance tunes and you'll find familiar fiddle tunes in friendly keys and meters alongside fairly complex tunes in less friendly dulcimer keys with strange and exotic rhythms and melodic twists and turns. Lots to learn along with healthy challenges galore. A book of *English Country Dance* music collected by Peter Barnes is a great place to start (home.comcast.net/~peterbarnes) as his publications are very clear and reliable.

Another fantastic collection of Peter Barnes' to learn from and enjoy is *A Little Couple Dancemusik*. It features tons of familiar tunes in friendly keys, along with a wonderful mix of world, ragtime, dance, and classical music. This is a great collection for advanced beginners to really advanced players as there is something for everyone and lots to learn in this volume.

The *Helicon International Acoustic Tune Book* (available from www.kenkolodner.com/books.html) is another wonderful resource for the hammered dulcimer player looking

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to explore. This volume includes music from places near and far (including China, Hungary, Scotland, Haiti, Finland, Macedonia, Canada, Greece, Peru, and lots more). Alongside of fiddle tunes in common meters, you'll also find some more uncommon meters (7/8, 2/2, 6/4), and exotic rhythms and melodies.

Or, as you continue to develop, you might take on a tune such as Jonathan Jensen's *Roi de Musette* (in his book of original tunes, *Candles in the Dark*, and available from www.cdss.org/sales/english_dance.html). This waltz, modeled after classic French musette music, has parts in G Major, G Minor, and C Major. In addition, it features a few accidentals, and also has the form ABACA. This tune can teach us a great deal about playing the hammered dulcimer, such as the relationships of different keys, new melodic and rhythmic patterns, accidentals, and much more.

In addition, you can learn to arrange tunes for solo dulcimer, and you can

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learn others' arrangements. With this in mind I suggest the hammered dulcimer solo books of Carrie Crompton (http://www.carriecrompton.com/books.html). The pieces are nicely arranged, not too difficult, and are very musical. Tons to learn in these books, including hand independence.

There is an endless supply of music and repertoire that you can learn to play and enjoy on the hammered dulcimer, including music originally written for other instruments. Music for piano, guitar, or harp all provide wonderful opportunities for us to learn new music. Some pieces will require some simplification in order to translate them into two voices (two hammers), but some will be ready to play as is. With the internet at our fingertips, we can listen to music from all over the world, and we can find mountains of written music that could keep us busy for many lifetimes. We've barely scratched the surface here, but we have to start somewhere. If you don't read music yet, or are just pretty rusty, now's the time to work on becoming literate. It's a skill just like any other, and it's easier to learn to read music than it is to learn to read English. Reading music is a skill that gives you entrance into a world of music that can be both very satisfying and growthful. I strongly recommend learning to read music to anyone who wants to fully explore this amazing world. Besides, it's wicked good fun.

In my next article, we'll look at a piece of music and begin to analyze what we can learn from it, along with tips about how to best approach learning it. If you have any views on this subject, I'd love to hear them. Also, if you can recommend any materials for expanding the hammered dulcimer repertoire, I'd love to hear from you about that, too, at steve@steveschneider.com. Thanks, be well, and stay in tune. DPN

Editor's Note: After many years of writing DPN's "Art of Performing" column, Steve has decided to focus more on hammered dulcimer topics. We appreciate his dedication to DPN and look forward to more great articles.

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by Norma Mahood

A Snowbird's Review of a Reviewer

When, early in the program, Neal Walters and his wife, Coleen, sang, *Lord, Don't Let Me Die 'til I'm Too Old to Die Young*, the whole audience smiled and sat back, knowing they were going to enjoy a great concert. Some people think that performers just want to sing and play, get paid, and then go home. But on January 10, 2007, Neal and Coleen drew all of us into their songs and stories and music. I knew that I was in the right place for a rousing performance. "In fact," I thought, "…*Not Dying Until I'm Too Old to Die Young* doesn't sound like a bad philosophy."

Neal and Coleen often invited us to sing along during their performance in the nave of Mount Dora Congregational Church, as they performed to a full house.

Coleen commented, "It is amazing how many people we see here, or already know, from music festivals in the Washington, D.C. area. It truly is a small world."

Many of those in attendance knew about Neal through his column in Dulcimer Players News. Tonight though, Neal wasn't writing a column, reviewing new CDs, or listening for the fine points in the performances of others. It was I who was taking notes and writing down questions to ask after the concert while hearing great songs and listening to my favorite instruments. Tonight, I was the reviewer.

What was I thinking when I had asked Neal and Coleen if I could write a review of their performance? I'm not a music critic. I'm not even on an advanced level as a dulcimist. I used to write a column for my local newspaper, but this was not a review of a garden party or an interview with one of the local eccentric characters. What had I gotten myself into? I started writing as fast as I could when I realized I was so caught up in the performance that I had forgotten to keep track of all the songs on the playlist. Then I realized that Ruth Harnden could help me with that task.

Ruth Harnden, member of MDDC and organizer of the Central Florida Dulcimer and Autoharp Festival, keeps tabs on almost everybody in the dulcimer world. Her passion for the dulcimer knows no bounds. When she learned that the Walters would be traveling from their home

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in Greencastle, PA, to Ft. Lauderdale, FL, where they would pay their own way on a "teaching" cruise, Ruth asked Neal to conduct an afternoon workshop for people wanting to learn more about playing the lap dulcimer, then have Coleen join him in presenting a concert that evening at Mount Dora. On the cruise, Neal would teach autoharp classes to raise funds that would benefit the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering to be held June 20-24, 2007 in Newport, Pa.

I learned quite a bit about the dulcimer world myself while spending an afternoon with Neal. First, I had no idea that Neal was such a virtuoso, playing the autoharp, banjo, lap dulcimer, and guitar. Second, we all found what a foundation Coleen's bass provided as an accompaniment to any string instrument. During the day, Neal provided anxiety-free lessons for musicians who were studying the lap dulcimer.

Without actually using the "T" word, Neal worked in a lesson in music "Theory"—a word that often leaves many young musicians stymied. This was the third thing I learned during the lesson. Our class explored the 1-3-5 tuning and then discovered the joys of D-G-D tuning, without realizing that we had studied "theory." The class was so encouraged that we all stayed for a lively jam session, practicing what we had learned in the afternoon classes. Workshop—what a success!

Well, getting back to reviewing the reviewer.

The fourth thing I observed was how important it is during a concert for the performer to let the audience know where the songs came from. For instance, I found it interesting that *Too Old to Die Young* was written by Kevin Welch, Scott Dooley, and John Hadley; but the Walters had learned the song from an album by Linda Ronstadt and Ann Savoy. Musically, there is quite a stretch of time between these two sets of musicians. But the meeting of minds seemed to work perfectly as Neal and Coleen sang their own version of the song.

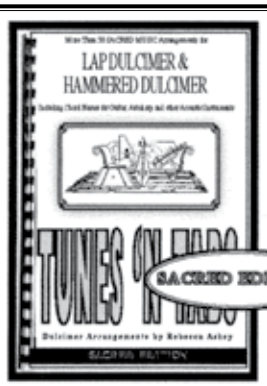
The playlist continued with old favorites as varied as *Little Birdie*, learned from the singing of Kentucky banjo player Roscoe Holcomb, and continued with Neal's *Cheat River Waltz*, composed on a creek bank in Elkins, WV.

I finally quit trying to critique Neal's and Coleen's performance when I heard *The Meaning of Home*, written by Ron Wall, Winfield international autoharp champion, and son-in-law of the late Grandpa Jones.

Neal and Coleen are part of the band Doofus, along with John and Heidi Cerigione. One of the last things I learned that night was that Coleen, who plays bass and has been singing most of her life, is also a prizewinning quilter. With such talents, I could not understand why these musicians called themselves "Doofus." "Go to our website," Neal said. "There you can learn the whole story about us."

Neal had started his performance by telling us that most of his old-time songs would be about love and death or barnyard animals. In closing my review, I realized that while his songs spoke of love that never grows old, death that can't separate hearts, and barnyard animals that didn't have to seek shelter from bitter cold weather, the performance was really about a love of music. I applaud my friends, Ruth Harnden and Sharon Link, President of the MDDC, for bringing a wonderful workshop and concert to Mount Dora, Florida. DPN

Submitted by Norma Mahood, who resides in Bluefield, Va. She enjoys a Snowbird Membership in the MDDC.



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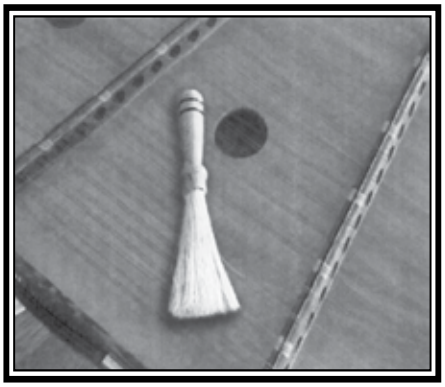

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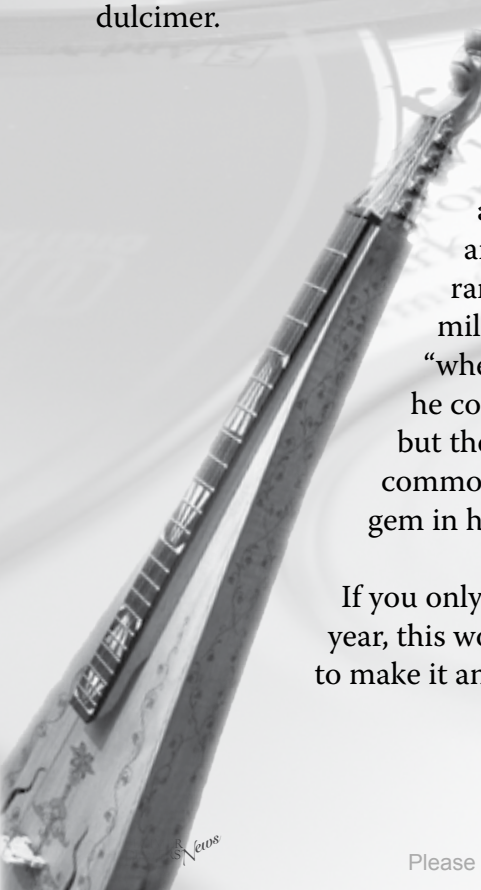
MUSIC REVIEWS

Bloom's General Store

Ken Bloom

The bowed dulcimer is "young but it is daily growing" and Ken Bloom is the man responsible. He makes them of course and, if you own a bowed dulcimer, it probably came from him (does anybody else even make them?) and he plays them – like no one else can or presumably ever will.

In short, Ken is a certified (or should that be certifiable?) legend in his own lifetime. His first album of bowed dulcimer music was truly groundbreaking and his latest recording, *Bloom's General Store*, will only add to his stature. The tunes are all wonderful and his playing is simply awesome. Although he's rounded up a great gang of musical cohorts to add to the enjoyment, he personally plays everything but the kitchen sink and that would include bowed dulcimer, Hardanger bowed dulcimer, guitar, bouzouki, eggs, gourd banjo, vocal, banjo bass, dobro, concert zither, and Weissenbornagain Hawaiian slack key dulcimer.



Ken's influences are legion and the tunes range from the mildly eclectic to the "where in the world did he come across that one" but they all have one thing in common: each tune is a perfect gem in his hands.

If you only buy one dulcimer album this year, this would be the one… I don't know how to make it any plainer.

Here to Play

Christie Burns & Butch Ross

So if you have enough money left to buy a second album, this would be a good one!

Life's full of little surprises.

This gem just leaped off my CD player and into my brain without much fuss and it has become lodged there. I had heard Butch play mountain dulcimer on his first album and I liked that a lot (see Spring 2005 DPN).

I knew who Christie Burns was, sort of, from reading postings on the internet about the Cork City Festival in Ireland. I didn't know they played together until getting this CD in the mail though (in fact, they're married!*) and I can only say "who knew?" They're absolutely great together and *Here to Play* is living proof. It's mostly a hammered dulcimer album and Christie's playing is poised, sure, driving, highly syncopated and engaging in every way.

I'm hooked. Butch mostly plays some excellent guitar backup (that's rather an understatement actually) but gets a chance to shine on mountain dulcimer on *Driving Forces*, his tribute to Robert Force. They also play some dulcimer/dulcimer pieces that really work and that's not something you hear every day.

This is a tour de force on every level. In fact and I wouldn't blame you if bought two of these!

Butch and Christie were married in the fall of 2006 and have recently relocated to Chattanooga, TN.

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by Neal Walters

Celtic Solitude
Linda Brockinton

Linda Brockinton is a former Winfield champion who is especially well known for her finger picking arrangements on mountain dulcimer. She is also an excellent, classically-trained flautist. *Celtic Solitude* shows off her considerable skills on both instruments.

The project is a compilation of some of the prettiest Celtic airs from all of her previous album releases. Much of the music is Linda on solo dulcimer or flute, but she gets help from Kay Martin, Brenda Ramsey, and Linda Odena on harp, flute and mountain dulcimer.

This is a very fine recording that is guaranteed

to soothe and satisfy.

The album is subtitled "Listen to the Silence, Be Still and Let Your Soul Catch Up" which in Linda's own words translates to "there ain't no hickey twangy thangs going on hyar." Linda's playing is beautifully controlled and each tune is a small masterpiece evoking a quiet and meditative feeling of tranquility. The harp and flute match the dulcimer's mood, and the music seems to move like a stately ripple across an equally stately pond.

There isn't a sharp edge anywhere and the effect is like nestling your head into a down pillow… so enveloping and so comforting.

It's magic.

Pathways & A Little Bumpy Out Here
Quintin Stephens

Quintin Stephens is a second-generation mountain dulcimer player who brings a decidedly fresh approach to the instrument. A dulcimer player from the age of eight, he has become a high energy performer who is especially known for his two-handed tapping technique and for freely adapting blues, rock and slide guitar techniques to the dulcimer.

Pathways features Quintin's originals with just a couple of exceptions while *A Little Bumpy Out There* is more traditionally oriented in terms of material, but both albums are pure Quintin in execution. As he puts it, this is "a peek inside my head when I stand outside the box… watch out it's a little bit bumpy out there!"

If originality and exuberance—combined with some exceptional musical skills and some killer pop "hooks"— are things you value, you're going to love Quintin's music. This is perfectly encapsulated in a little ditty Quintin calls *Mission Statement.* It starts out with a recreation of an old scratchy recording of *Boil Them Cabbage Down* and segues into a Caribbean-flavored version of the same tune, which is his way of saying "out with the old and in with the new."

Three Blind Mice gets the same treatment, as do a number of other traditional warhorses. It's not something that Jean Ritchie might play, but I would bet that even the most hidebound traditionalist among us will be smiling by the time a few of these tails are cut off with the proverbial carving knife. The only way to know for sure is to listen for yourself. I strongly encourage you to do so.

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MUSIC REVIEWS by Neal Walters

Music from My Galaxy
Mark Shelton

Mark Shelton's galaxy includes some very interesting stuff indeed. Mark is a percussionist who typically plays over a dozen instruments in performance and blends influences from classical, jazz, folk, and pop. He peppers his audience with stories and jokes as he moves from four mallets to two drumsticks to bare hands. A marimba soloist since the early 80's, he began to seek a more personal repertoire and, in addition to his original compositions and improvisations, he began to play the Hang, a recently developed instrument from Switzerland that combines steel pan sounds with hand drumming technique. A strong interest in folk music drew Mark toward some of the percussion instruments used in traditional American and Celtic music and he is very much at home playing fiddle tunes on the hammered dulcimer in addition to excelling on the bodhran and bones. What I'm trying to say is that *Music from My Galaxy* is a totally eclectic mix of music for hammered dulcimer, marimba, hang, bones, clackamore, riq, udu, and cajon and it's really excellent. The dulcimer playing is superb and the rest is totally mind boggling. It all certainly goes a long way toward buttressing the theory that the dulcimer is really a percussion instrument at its core. This is really cool stuff!

Dulcimerica, Volume 1
Bing Futch

Bing Futch has been making music on the mountain dulcimer for a long time. As front man for the Americana band, Mohave, he has demonstrated a unique playing style that incorporates tribal rhythms from African and Native American influences as well as Celtic and early mountain music. His technique is equal parts traditional and experimental, with a fondness for playing in DAA tuning. He also plays electric dulcimer with the band as well using distortion, delay and various digital effects to create a sound that has been described as "musical Tabasco" among other things. Mohave has performed at Walt Disney World and opened for bands such as the southern rockers Molly Hatchet and the classic doo-wop group The Crests. That's a pretty impressive resume but it doesn't really prepare you for his latest album which is solo dulcimer with no electronic gimmicks at all. The only "extra" is some fine harmonica playing by Charles Stansell. Bing is a really fine player with an eclectic taste in music that takes him from *Polly Wolly Doodle* one minute to *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* the next. *Dulcimerica, Volume 1* is a real treat that showcases Bing's excellent playing on a wide variety of material, including several originals.

Music Reviews Contact Information

Tittle	Address	Phone	Electronic
Bloom's General Store	RR Route#3, Box 568 Pilot Mountain, NC 27041	336-368-2847	kgbloom@advi.net www.bolick.net/bloom/
Here to Play	524 E. 18th Street Chattanooga, TN 37408	267-235-3249	dulcimerdulcimer@gmail.com www.myspace.com/ christieandbutch
Pathways & Little Bit Bumpy Out Here	2207 Merrill Hills Circle Katy, TX 77450	281-693-5151	quintank@aol.com www.QuintinStephens.com
Celtic Solitude	3343 Wise Road Alexander, AR 72002	501-316-2055 501-231-8212	lindabrockinton@sbcglobal.net www.lindabrockinton.com
Music from My Galaxy		800-272-2249	markshelton@verizon.net www.marksheltonmusic.com
Dulcimerica, Volume 1	1408 34th Street Orlando, FL 32839	407-257-5598	jae@jobentertainment.com

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Congratulations to all the 2006 Winfield Winners!

Above are Jeff Hames. 1st place National Mountain Dulcimer and Heidi Cerrigione, 2nd place International Autoharp, as they accept their prize instruments.

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Quick Picks

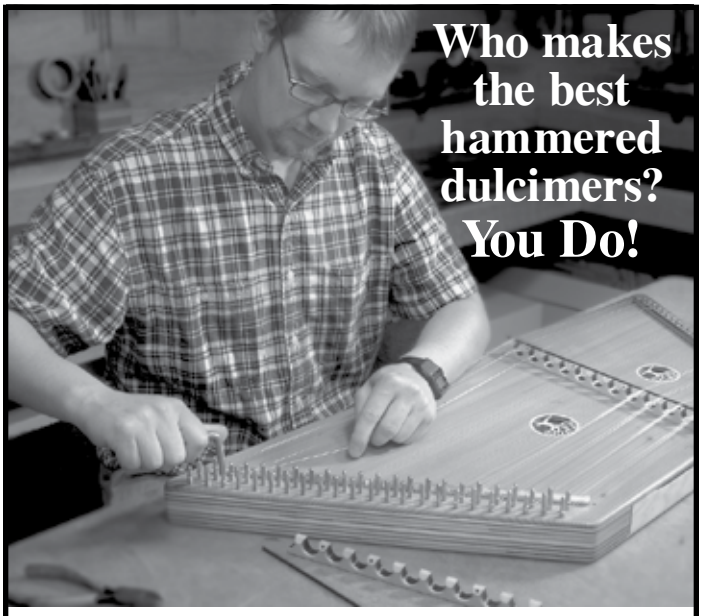
by Neal Walters

The Water is Wide

Lee Cagle & Betty Dawson

Box 303
Ellendale, TN 38029
901-372-0510
lee@LeeCagleDulcimers.com
www.LeeCagleDulcimers.com

Lee Cagle, who many of you will know from her role as a principal in the Memphis Dulcimer Festival, plays mountain dulcimer and psaltery. Betty Lawson plays hammered dulcimer, autoharp and bodhran. On *The Water Is Wide* they are joined by Steve Newman on guitar and John Albertson on mandolin, cello, fiddle, bouzouki and banjo. The album was conceived as a volunteer project to benefit the Church Health Center in Memphis, a project begun in 1987 to provide quality, affordable healthcare for working, uninsured people and their families. The album consists largely of jam session standards played simply and beautifully. The tunes were chosen to complement exercise and physical fitness programs, meditative and reading programs, and other outreach projects. Lee has also written a book containing all the tablature for the mountain dulcimer arrangements used on the album; it is available as a companion to the recording.



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Tunes for Two or More

Beth Lassi & Nina Zanetti

76 Willow St
Guilderland, NY 12084,
zanetti@siena.edu
dlassi@nycap.rr.com

Those of you who regularly play with a partner or partners will be interested to hear about Beth and Nina's new book of arrangements for mountain dulcimer ensemble playing. There are 13 duets and two arrangements for three or more dulcimers. They are mostly familiar tunes that they hope will get you hooked on the fun of playing together. Beth and Nina are both excellent musicians who play together frequently. If you've heard them play, then you're already hooked! They are terrific. If you haven't heard them, this is an excellent introduction to the art of playing with others. A variety of duet-playing styles is featured, including off-the-beat backup, arpeggiated chords, and counter melodies. I've seen a lot of discussion on the internet asking about resources for playing duets, and this book certainly fills the bill.

Jamming

Hills of Kentucky Dulcimer Club

c/o Betty Stoeckel
5405 Cannas Dr
Cincinnati, OH 45238
513-451-4996
www.HOKDulcimer.com

The Hills of Kentucky Dulcimer Club has been together since 1992 and *Jamming* is their second release. The group includes 35 mountain dulcimer players, one accordion, two autoharps, one fiddle, one mandolin, six banjimers, two banjos, three hammered dulcimers, three spoon players, 1 bodhran, three guitars, two harmonicas, a tambourine and a washtub bass (not to mention a partridge in a pear tree). Like their first album, most of the tunes are played by the entire ensemble, but the CD also includes "specials" by a few smaller groups of club members. Their recipe is a good one; it includes a sizeable helping of session standards as well as some more unusual tunes that they have made their own. Serving instructions are to "mix a room full of dulcimers together with a dash of autoharp, banjo, guitar and other traditional instruments. Beat in rhythm, add a little harmony and blend until smooth. Sprinkle with a few flavorful specialties and serve on a shiny disc."

Sutch Sounds

Adam Sutch

80 Pike Run Dr
Daisytown, PA 15427
724-938-8851
sutch@zoominternet.net

Adam Sutch is a young hammered dulcimer player from Pennsylvania who has released two albums of dulcimer music. *Sutch Sounds* is his latest; it features Adam's playing along with Ron Howes on lead gui-

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tar, Darlene Howes on rhythm guitar, and Michell Sutch on back-up hammered dulcimer. Adam credits Dan Landrum, Bill Schilling, Dan Duggan, Lesley Miller and Mark Wade as influences and Adam has obviously learned his lessons well. The album features mostly traditional fiddle tunes with a couple of tunes from his mentors mixed in for good measure. This is an auspicious debut and I'm sure we're going to see big things from Adam in the future.

Lesson 8

Steve Siefert

1260 Old Charlotte Pike
Pegram, TN 37143,
615-353-8230
www.stephenseifert.com

The latest in Steve's subscription DVD series features an extended lesson focusing on The Land of Beulah, a.k.a. Angel Band. The DVD starts out with a quarter note version to get the melody down, then presents a fingerpick version, a flatpick version, a chord-melody approach, a more advanced flatpick version, and finishes with two "contemporary two-string" versions. As usual, all the music is also tabbed out. This issue also kicks off Steve's approach to music theory with the start of what he calls his Dulcimer Music Theory 101. This series of articles is intended to help provide you with what you need to take your music to "that next level." Another article provides a review/description of **Transcribe!** software for picking those licks off of recordings. "Katie's Korner" features lots of pictures. Finally, Steve reminisces about playing with the late David Schnaufer. As mentioned before, this series of DVD lessons is the next best thing to studying privately with Steve.

Christmas Sweetness

John Hockett

Maiden Creek Dulcimers
4122 Melrose Drive
Wooster, OH 44691
330-345-7825

John Hockett has re-released his Christmas collection, which was originally published in 1990. It contains nearly 20 holiday favorites and a few lesser known European carols arranged for mountain dulcimer. The arrangements are laid out in standard notation, as well as dulcimer tablature, and are roughly divided between tunes tabbed in D-A-D and tunes tabbed in D-A-A. If you're looking for some new or old holiday material, this might be the answer.

Going Down to Cairo

Sean Ruprecht-Belt

3838 McDonald Street
St. Louis, MO 63116
sruprect@sbcglobal.net

Sean Ruprecht-Belt has a dandy new book of Midwestern, old-time fiddle tunes arranged for mountain dulcimer. They also make great dulcimer tunes and should be welcome additions to any intermediate player's repertoire. Sean has arranged each piece in a melody/drone style, and usually in at least two tunings, for example D-A-D and D-A-A or E-A-E and D-A-D, capo IV. When the tune is not a "D" tune, this gives you the choice of either retuning to A or G or simply capoing at the 3rd or 4th fret to play the tune in the key that the fiddlers would play it in. Sean also provides some background on his sources. This is a fine resource for some great tunes that should be finding their way into dulcimer jams.

'Tis the Season

Jeanne Page

Mel Bay Publications, Inc.
#4 Industrial Drive
Pacific, MO 63069
email@melbay.com
www.melbay.com

Also in a holiday vein, Jeanne Page has a new printed collection for hammered dulcimer that offers some gems for New Year's Day, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The only holiday that's not in there is my birthday, and almost anything will do for me! The collection includes a melody-only version and an intermediate arranged version with accompanying guitar chords. The melody-only version can be used as a lead line for other instruments, or as a beginning level version. The intermediate version can stand by itself or be used by advanced players as a jumping off point for adding more arpeggios, fills, scale runs, etc.

Maggie's Big Book of Celtic Tunes

Maggie Sansone

Mel Bay Publications, Inc.
#4 Industrial Drive
Pacific, MO 63069
email@melbay.com
www.melbay.com

Who doesn't admire the music of Maggie Sansone? No one that I know! Her latest Mel Bay book now gives you a dulcimer case full of arrangements (124 to be exact) for hammered dulcimer, all drawn from her recordings and performances. Chords are provided to identify the harmonic structure of the tune and to provide direction for advanced embellishments and variations. Some of the tunes are presented as a simple melody line with chords; others are transcribed as fuller arrangements with new variations. Typical embellishments include flams, grace notes, slides and rolls. This is a treasure trove of good tunes from an acknowledged mistress of the genre.

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Cantiga's Renaissance

Robert Bielefeld

Mel Bay Publications, Inc.
#4 Industrial Drive
Pacific, MO 63069
email@melbay.com
www.melbay.com

This is another big book of tunes from Mel Bay containing songs, dance music and instrumental pieces that are now finding renewed popularity with modern musicians, particularly at Renaissance Festivals and Medieval Faires. Cantiga has been performing at Renaissance Festivals for over twenty years. This collection contains 143 of their favorites. It's laid out for lead instruments, with guitar chords and lyrics as well. The tunes come from all over the globe and should provide a wealth of new material for almost anyone. Many of the tunes are played by Cantiga on an accompanying CD.

The Halfway Ground

Jerimoth Hill

Rabbit Island Music
19 Walker Road
Foster, RI 02825
401-392-1909
www.atwater-donelly.com

Elwood Donnelly (vocals and guitar) and Aubrey Atwater (mountain dulcimer, banjo and mandolin) recruited a number of like-minded musicians, including; John and Heidi Cerrigione on bass and autoharp, Cathy Casper-Torch on fiddle and cello, Kevin Doyle on percussion, and Elwood's son, Uriah, on piano, and formed Jerimoth Hill (named after the highest point in little Rhode Island) for the purpose of making the gospel album that had long been one of Elwood's dreams. The album features some great singing in five-part harmony and some great songs. In the interest of full disclosure, I must confess that Aubrey's dulcimer is featured on only two songs, but I believe the album will still be of considerable interest to the readers of this magazine.

Wonderful Hymns and Harmonious Dulcimer

Linda Brockinton

3343 Wise Road
Alexander, AR 72002
501-316-2055
501-231-8212
lindabrockinton@sbcglobal.net
www.lindabrockinton.com

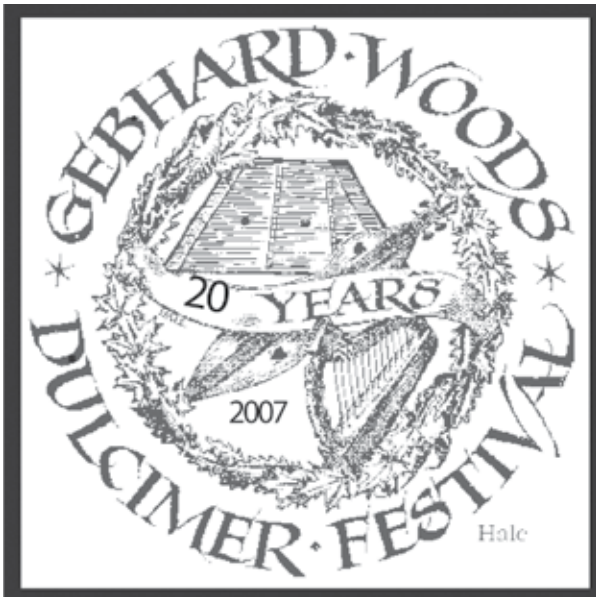
In addition to her new CD [*see the reviews column*], Linda Brockinton has two new books out that should prove to be equally welcome additions to your library. *Wonderful Hymns* features nine of legendary composer Fanny Crosby's hymns (she wrote nearly 9,000 in her lifetime) arranged for beginner, intermediate and duet playing. *Harmonious Dulcimer* is a quick guide to playing, with answers to a host of questions that beginners tend to ask. Linda gives some pointers on music theory, learning an instrument, tuning, chord shapes, tablature, and fingering that will pay dividends for almost any player. The arrangements can be played fingerstyle or by strumming and feature standard notation, as well as tablature for the DAD tuning.

Corner Cup Sunrise

Kathie Jerrell

500 Jackson Street
Walkerton, IN 46574
574-586-7339
kjteach@jerrell.org

Kathie Jerrell's new CD features her delightful hammered dulcimer playing in a very nice program of traditional materi-



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al, with a couple of contemporary tunes mixed in for good measure. Dan Landrum joins her as a "guest hammerer" on two cuts, and Alan Shikoh adds bass. The album title refers to her friends down at the Corner Cup Café in Walkerton, IN where she plays regularly. As Kathie says, "add some coffee and music to a sunrise and you have a delightful start to your day." Indeed that's the truth and Kathie's playing will provide a delightful start to your day as well.

Mylodic Isle

Jennifer Mylod

2251 Old Church Road,
Toms River, NJ 08753,
732-255-8181
www.jennifermylod.com

Jennifer Mylod's second CD release (the first was reviewed in the Spring 2000 issue) is again a program of traditional Irish tunes and songs. Jennifer plays mountain dulcimer, guitar, percussion and fiddle and gets backing from her husband, Phillip, on Uilleann pipes, bodhran, and Irish whistles. There are additional contributions from John Wilson on 12-string guitar, Tom White on guitar and bouzouki, Mairean Gittelman on fiddle, and Tom Gittelman on fiddle. Though only three cuts feature dulcimer, this is a really nice album that showcases Jennifer's strong singing and smooth fiddling.

Gospel According to Samuel

Sam Stone

Sassafras Hill Music
808 Castetter Road
Henryville, IN 47125
samhenry@thepoint.net

Sam Stone, the bearded bard of Henryville, IN, is an inspiration to anyone has heard him play and sing. At least one of his original songs is in the repertoire of most dulcimer performers, and he keeps coming up with more. His latest collection is a book of gospel songs that contains a number of Sam's originals, as well as some favorites from his childhood. The book contains piano notation, mountain dulcimer tablature and accompanying chords. The Gospel According to Samuel provides some interesting background on Sam's love of the music, along with his sage advice on using tablature. This is a must have for lovers of his music, or a great introduction to those of you not familiar with it.

Oceans So Green

Rogue's Consort

449 Hidden Valley Lane
Cincinnati, OH 45215
513-761-7585
www.kitchenmusician.net/pages/records.html

Oceans So Green is a superb album of "Music from Ireland in Colonial America." From the opening image of immigrants looking out from their ship upon a vast green ocean of uncharted forests, to the dance tunes, drinking songs, and beautiful airs that follow, the album's concept is expertly realized through nearly 30 carefully researched songs of the period. Rogue's Consort is Sara and Maynard Johnson, Carmen Pillitteri, John Turner and Sara Walthery playing harp, fiddles, hammered dulcimer, violincello, harpsichords, pianoforte, recorders, flageolets, citterns, and English guitar. This is delightful music that captures the imagination and makes you feel as though you were actually there! The liner notes are a treasure in and of themselves.

Here and There

Mountain Mist

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safrump@hotmail.com
www.mountainmist.ueuo.com

Mountain Mist is a dulcimer duo who entertain throughout Southern Ohio. Both Virginia Spillman and Sue Frump play a variety of instruments which includes, but is not limited to, mountain dulcimer, banjimer, autoharp, mandolin, hammered dulcimer, psaltery and the folk harp. Their repertoire includes a variety of music genres such as folk, country, Celtic, gospel, blues, polka, classical, traditional, jazz, Civil-war era, and Christmas. Their new CD is subtitled "music for all occasions" and the tunes are all standards forming a mixture of traditional, Celtic, gospel, and even a couple of contemporary tunes. Brian Stritenberger contributes acoustic guitar and bass, Ellen Pennington joins in on recorder, and Paul McComb and Loren Reed help out on acoustic guitar. It's a very nice debut.

Promenade Home

The Barnstormers

c/o Tom Jolin
596 Orchard Road
Orrtanna, PA 17353
717-642-8053
jolin@netrax.net

Slim Harrison plays fiddle, banjo, mountain dulcimer, and harmonica. Tom Jolin plays hammered dulcimer, banjo, button accordion, guitar, harmonica, and bowed psaltery. They both sing and together they are the Barnstormers. They've been playing together for more than 26 years and their specialty is old-time American folk music. *Promenade Home* is full of rollicking old- time fiddle/banjo tunes, traditional folk songs of long ago, and even a little dance calling. Some of the instruments they made themselves. They are international favorites having performed at the Viljandi, Estonia Folk Festival in addition to regular performances in and around their homes on the Pennsylvania/Maryland border. This is good homemade music honestly and sincerely played, and designed to set your feet to tapping.

Popsies

Whole Cloth Productions

Steve Weinrebe Productions
103 N Riding Dr
Morrestown, NJ 08057

Popsies is a DVD made for children aged birth to 18 months. Steve and Lara use hand puppets to entertain and to educate. The DVD is designed to "stimulate and engage your infant or toddler with positive, gently paced stories, bright colors, and original rhythmic music performed on Appalachian dulcimer". The chapters cover topics such as tools, building, love and family, hide and seek, mothering, grooming, happy and sad, music, sharing and dancing.

While the video of the hand puppets illustrates the point of the chapter, the dulcimer accompaniment provides the audio stimulation. Steve plays all the dulcimer parts which are often coordinated with the actions of the puppets as in the music chapter. The whole thing works pretty well for me and, I'm going to guess, it would work very well indeed for your toddler. It's certainly one way to get your kids interested in the dulcimer at an early age. The DVD lasts about 25 minutes and is in stereo sound and widescreen format.

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Editor's Note

Know The Score is a new section of Dulcimer Players News where we gather printed music and articles on general music theory. The best way to learn any skill is to practice it, so we intend to include more sheet music with each issue. When possible, we'll also include an audio version of what you see in the magazine. Subscribers will find these on the included CD and on the DPN web site - www.dpnews.com.

Be sure and see Chuck Boody's guide to finding music on the web on page 47.

Music Theory 101 – The Mode Map!
by Steve Phillips

People often think of music theory as a bunch of dull and lifeless rules that someone in the ninth century made up to torture minstrels. But it's not true. Music theory is your treasure map pointing the way for tonal exploration.

That's where the modes come in. Modes give color to your music, creating different colors from jovial to melancholy to mystical. You know much more about modes than you realize. Every time you play any song on the dulcimer or guitar you are playing in a mode. Take a look at the chart to the right and you'll see what I mean.

Even if you don't read music you can follow this. Take your instrument and play from C up one octave to the C above, playing no flats or sharps along the way. Congratulations, you've just played in the Ionian mode. Yes, you're absolutely right, that's a major scale. But there's more. Now play from D up to the D one octave higher, still playing no flats or sharps. Congrats again, you've just played the Dorian mode. The chart is your guide to all the modes in use today.

If you keep going you'll see that the scale from E to E is the Phrygian mode, making a very cool eastern sound. F to F is the Lydian mode. G to G is the Mixolydian mode. A to A is the Aeolian mode – also called *natural minor*. And B to B is the Locrian mode. (That one isn't used very much, even in modal jazz, but I think it deserves some airplay – very exotic.)

So that's mode theory in one easy lesson. There's one other thing you need to know. The modes get transposed into all the keys. Here's how that works. If you start on D and play a major scale (the Ionian mode), there will be two sharps. (d-e-f#-g-a-b-c#-d). Keep those same two sharps and play from E to E and you have the Dorian mode, and we call it E Dorian. From F# to F# is called F# Phrygian, and so on. So the modes are all based on the major scale, and take their starting notes from their relation to that scale.

Start exploring and see how much fun it is to reward your ears with cool new modal sounds.

Ionian	Dorian	Phrygian	Lydian	Mixolydian	Aeolian	Locrian	Treble Bridge		Lydian	Phrygian	Dorian	Ionian
						7	A					
					7	6	G					
				7	6	5	F					
			7	6	5	4	E	A				
		7	6	5	4	3	D	G				
	7	6	5	4	3	2	C	F	1	2	3	4
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	B	E		1	2	3
6	5	4	3	2	1		A	D			1	2
5	4	3	2	1			G	C				1

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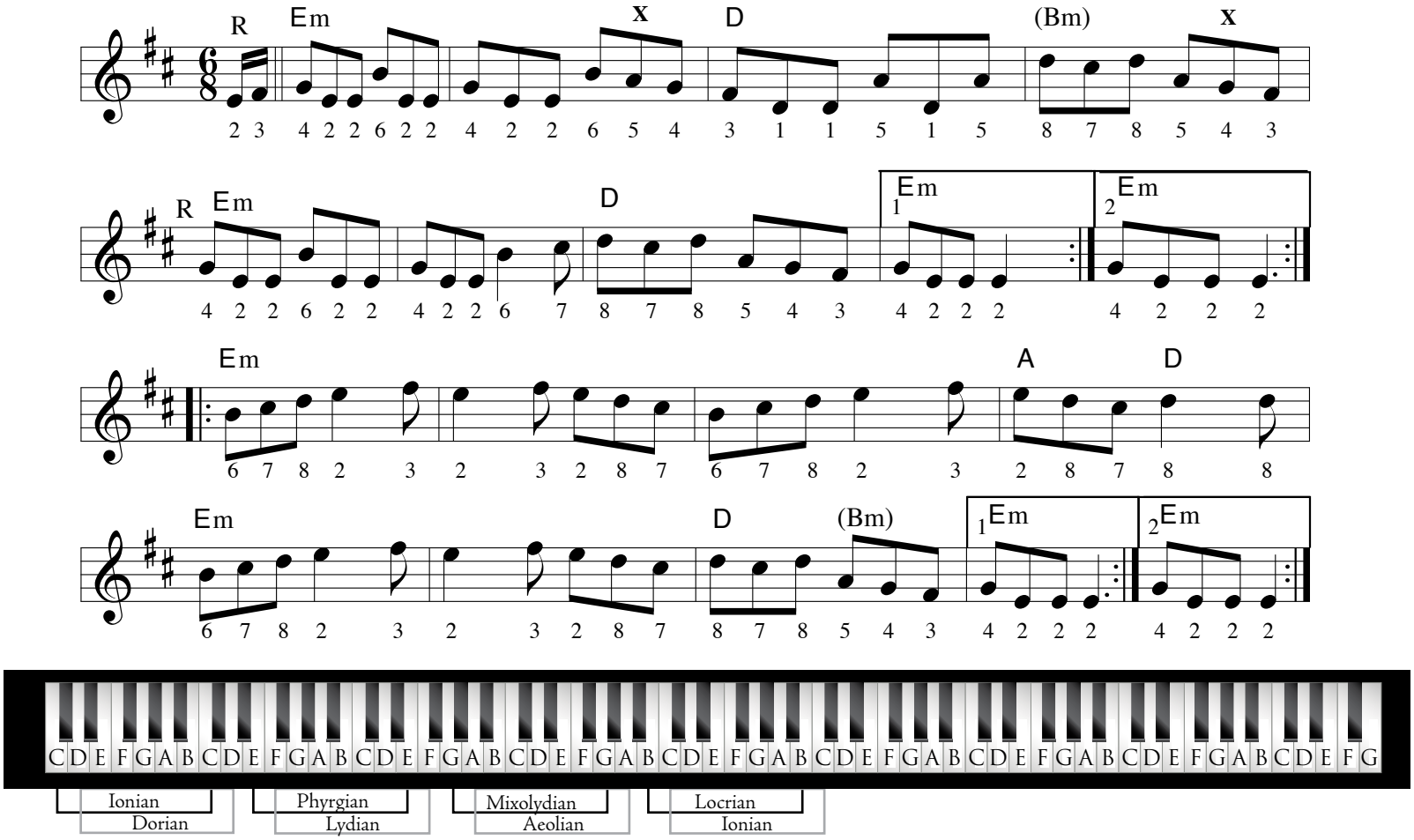
Swallowtail Jig

The D scale is used for the numbers. D is 1, E 2, etc.. B minor chords can be substituted for D chords.
X=cross the bridge. R=right hand.

alternate hands EVERY time within phrase

Key: E Dorian
traditional Irish
version: Karen Ashbrook



The Dorian Mode- The "Folk" Minor
by Karen Ashbrook

Take a look at the piano keyboard -- 7 white keys and 5 black keys in each octave. Play the white keys starting on C and you get a major scale. If you start on a D with the white keys you get a Dorian scale, the minor scale used in Jazz, Irish, Scottish & Appalachian music. Old-time musicians call it "modal." Irish music doesn't have a common way of referring to it. The Dorian mode has one more sharp than what classical musicians call a minor scale. E minor has one sharp but E Dorian has 2 sharps.

On hammered dulcimer, move your major scale pattern up one note and you have a Dorian scale. On lap dulcimer from DAD, tune the melody string down a whole step to C (DAC) to get a D Dorian scale starting on the first fret. The 6th note of the scale is a half step higher than in minor, but often that is not an important melody note. The main difference between minor and Dorian is that in the latter, the 7th note of the scale is a featured melody note. Many tunes in A Dorian go back and forth between an A note and a G note (think Cluck Ole Hen or Ten Penny Bit).

This makes the basic chord progression the Root/i chord (minor) alternating with the VII chord a whole step down, which is major. The v chord (minor) – conveniently VII's relative minor -- can always be substituted for the VII.

Beyond the Root and VII chord, other chords are secondary or substitute harmonies.

In *Swallowtail Jig* the A part melody alternates between an Em chord (the root) and a D (VII). The B part goes up and down the part of the scale with the major 6 (the one note different from a minor scale).

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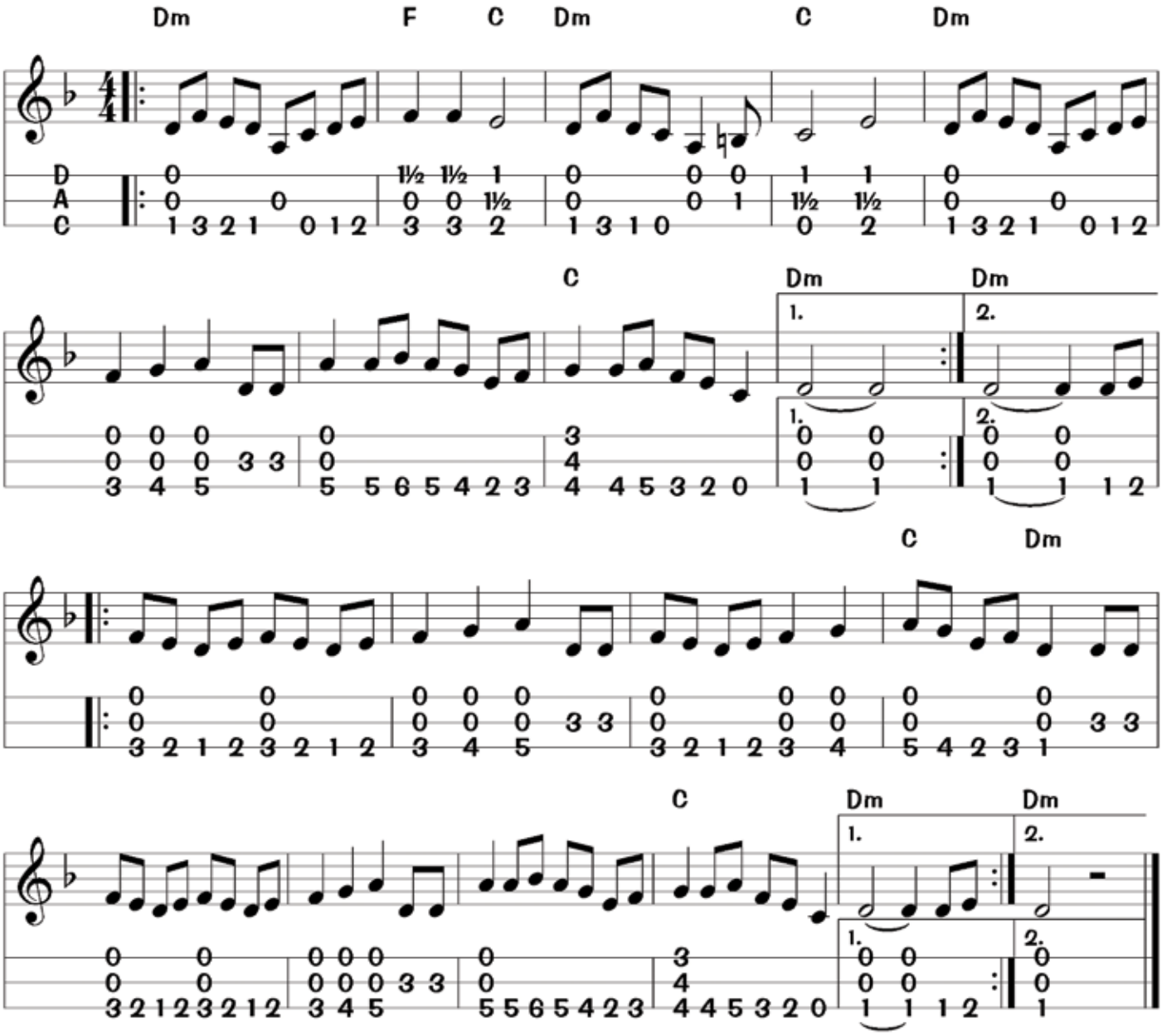
Sally in the Garden



"Sally in the Garden" is an old banjo tune that Heidi Cerrigione and I thought would sound good on the dulcimer. It's in the DAC tuning and it works well with the 1½ fret that is becoming so popular. It's not terribly difficult if you work your way through it slowly and learn a couple of new fingerings. It can be played fast of course but we like it at a more moderate tempo. Doofus Music (http://www.doofusmusic.com) is just one of a number of WEB sites that offer free tablature available for download. There are more than 30 tunes on the site at present with more being added at more or less regular intervals.

If you have a site with TABs posted or know of a good one, give us some feedback via the DPN WEB site and we'll start compiling a list for possible publication in the magazine.

Neal Walters, Spring 2007

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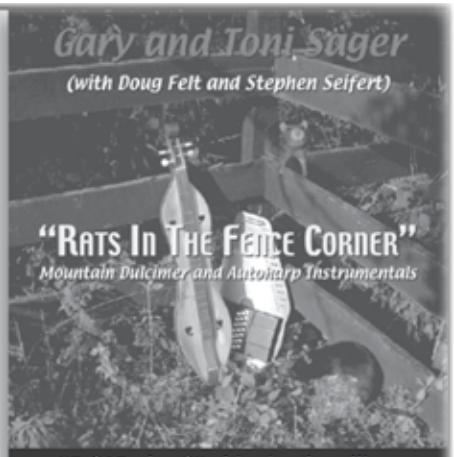

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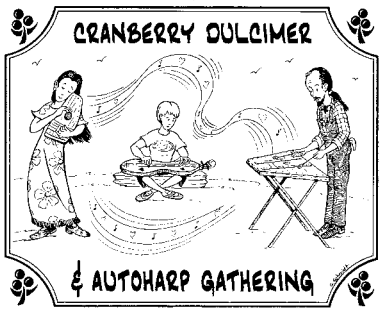

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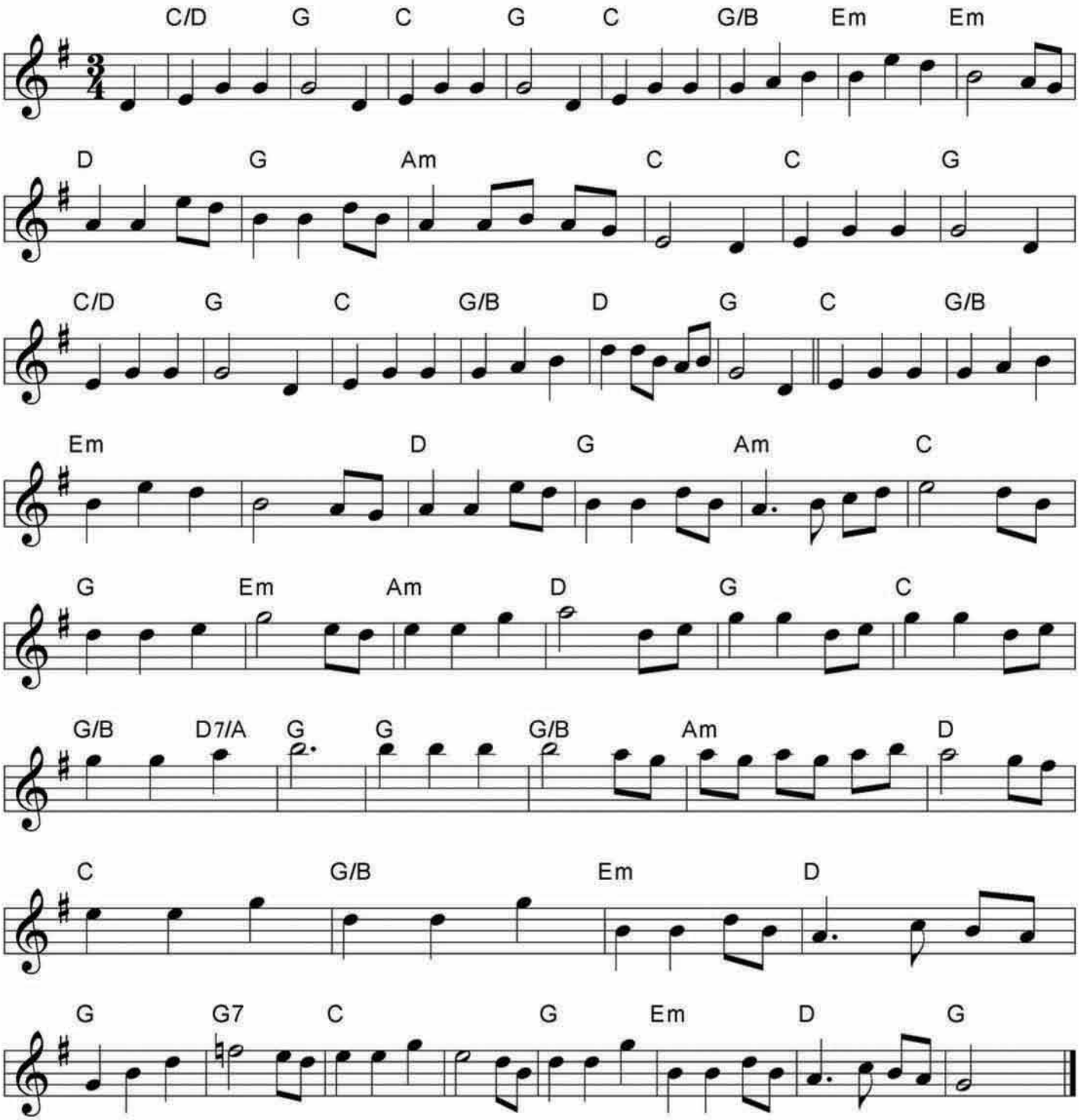
Give Me Your Hand

Irish Air
G major



from *Mystic Dance*, MM 111

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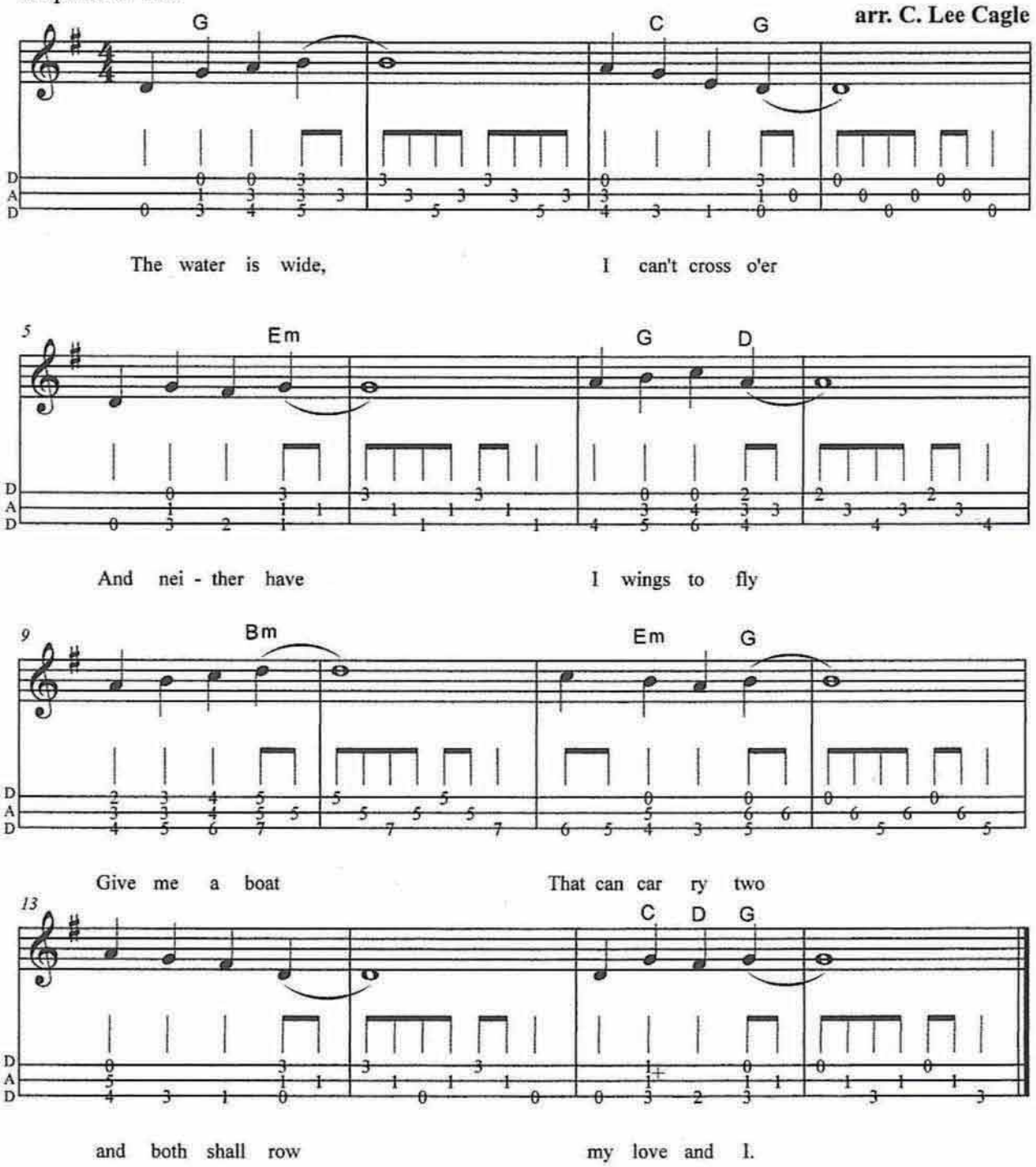

*If you do not have the 1+ fret to make the C chord in measure 15, simply pluck the melody note at 3.

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Finding Music on the Web

by Chuck Boody

There are more tunes and more versions of tunes available on the web than any of us will ever know. Almost any traditional tune can be found, and many newer tunes by still-living composers are also out there. In this artice I offer a few things to know and places to go to get you started searching for tunes.

FORMATS

Paper trained players can find notated versions of tunes in any one of several graphic formats; GIF, PDF, and PNG are the most common. Of these, PDF will give you the nicest printed copies, but GIF and PNG will make perfectly usable copies.

Players who prefer to learn by ear may find audio versions of tunes in several formats: MIDI, MP3, or WMV. MIDI files can easily be slowed down or sped up, but the sound will be limited to the quality of the 'MIDI instruments" you have in your computer. MP3 and WMV (or WMA sometimes) are recorded versions of the tunes by real instrumentalists and so are better listening, but you may need special software to slow them down for learning.

Happily one doesn't need to worry much about how to get at the file types mentioned above, because almost all computers now come with the software needed to view notated music or play audio versions. If your computer did not, go to www.adobe.com to get a free PDF reader and www.apple.com/quicktime/mac.html for a free download of QuickTime (click on the "free Download" button to get to a spot

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where you can download QuickTime for Windows machines). QuickTime will play MIDI, MP3 and some WMA files.

ABC FILES

By far the largest number of tunes are available in a music language called "ABC." It is an easy language to learn, but the nicest thing about it is you don't need to learn it to use the tunes. Some sites will translate the tunes for you into the other forms mentioned above automatically and one site will allow you to paste in any ABC file and get back notation in a variety of formats and/or MIDI sound files (see below). You can avoid using special software but if you do much with ABC files you'll soon find yourself wanting a program on your computer to manipulate them. For PCs the common program is abc2win (www.abc2win.com) for Mac the program is Barfly (www.barfly.dial.pipex.com). The starting point for all things ABC including most of the large collections of music in ABC format is Chris Walshaw's, which is at the top of the list to the left. The site to use to translate a single ABC file into notation or MIDI format is www.concertina.net/tunes_convert.html.

Web Address	Description
www.walshaw.plus.com/abc/	Lists most of the large collections of ABC files. A good place to browse.
trillian.mit.edu/~jc/cgi/abc/tunefind	Search by title or part of title or country or almost anything else will return a list of the files found with options to see them as GIFs and/or download them in almost any format. Be warned that there are some files out here that are very badly done. But there are probably 40,000 files indexed (or so).
www.alisdair.com/gear-software/biablinks.html	The starting place for files in Band in a Box format. You need to own Band In A Box to use these files.
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www.sosyourmom.com/	Gateway to complete works of O'Carolan, O'Neill's Music of Ireland and other collections. ABC, MIDI, GIF and NMC (Noteworthy Composer) formats.
www.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page	Choral Music Public Domain Library. Choral music in a variety of formats. Not necessarily for the dulcimer but wonderful stuff. Some works are edited without telling you that. A variety of formats, but PDF most common.
www.thesession.org/index.php	Supposedly just Irish music, but really much more than that. Many tunes with ABC, printable sheet music and comments about the tunes. Also some lively discussion sections, and a large listing of contents of recordings. Be careful with the transcriptions, there are many badly transcribed tunes. Usually the comments sections point that out though.
www.hetzlersfakebook.com/	About 550 traditional tunes in rather nice MIDI versions. Intended for "play along" use. Many of the common tunes are here.
www.freesheetmusic.net/	Just what it says. Many kinds of music. MIDI and PDF formats. These appear to be mostly well done transcriptions from large previously printed editions. MIDIs are not necessarily at performance tempos. Lots of classical works as well as traditional music.
www.contemplator.com/tunebook/index.htm	Absolutely wonderful MIDI files of more than 500 tunes. These are actually enjoyable music as well as a wonderful source for tunes and for good intros and closing ideas. I think the best traditional MIDI files on the net.
www.slowplayers.org/index.html	Many of the common Irish session tunes. MIDI ABC, GIF and PDF.
www.musicaviva.com/fsmd/index.tpl	A directory of sources...Many Many!
www.ibiblio.org/fiddlers/index.html	The Fiddler's Companion. Many ABC files and extensive historical information about tunes and tune history.
www.kitchenmusician.net/	Home site of the "Kitchen Musicians" Sara and Maynard Johnson. Many many tunes in GIF and MIDI format, Serious and humorous historical information and much much more.
www.cranfordpub.com/tunes/abcs/abc_tunes.htm	Mostly Cape Breton pieces. ABC, GIF and MP3 files of real performances.
www.hopkins.k12.mn.us/pages/Bookmarks/clinks/Music2.html	My own somewhat dated collection of music sites. Check the "Printable Music" section.
sniff.numachi.com/	An alternate site for the Digital Tradition. Thousands of traditional songs. This site provides ABC, Postscript,GIF, PNG MIDI, Pennywhistle and Lap Dulcimer Tab versions.

GENERAL WARNINGS

There are many files of music on the web with tunes that are not in the public domain. You can easily find, for example, *Ashokan Farewell, Crested Hen(s)*, or *Dark Island,* none of which is in the public domain. Most of the composers of these and similar tunes are perfectly willing to have their music distributed, but if you plan to do that in any formal way (like a workshop or a tune book) you should contact the composer for permission to do so. Be as respectful of composers as you are of their often wonderful music.

There are many badly transcribed versions of tunes on the web. This happens when someone who is not particularly familiar with music notation decides to write down a tune and make it available. You can find 3/4 tunes transcribed in 4/4 and all sorts of other common errors. You can also find errors in the musical language (like ABC) that may change the length of particular notes. You can find some truly strange suggestions for chords. And, you can find legitimate, quite different versions of the same tune. So, use the music you get as a guide and not as a gospel.

Chuck Boody
cboody@mcfmail.net

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Artist Profile - Steve & Ruth Smith

by Carl Tyrie

If there were a list of hammered dulcimer uses, "therapy instrument" might be included, at least as far as Ruth Smith of Boone, N.C., is concerned. During a winter-long recovery from November, 2001 kidney transplant surgery, Ruth turned to her dulcimer. "I found myself with some time on my hands, some unexpected time during my recovery," she says, "and I started playing it and I absolutely fell in love with the instrument."

Ruth has been a musician for most of her life, in part because her father was a music professor at the University of Illinois. Ruth's introduction to music, in fact, preceded her birth. "Mom used to sit for hours when she was pregnant with me listening to my dad's orchestra rehearse," she says. It's appropriate that Ruth was born at a summer music camp (Brevard) where her dad was teaching.

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As a University of Illinois music education major, Ruth played multiple instruments in addition to the classical piano she grew up playing. She took her first step toward Celtic Appalachian music when she met her future husband Steve, who had grown up in a musical family in Athens, Ohio. "I was an itinerant musician on the road playing restaurants and supper clubs," he says. " I grew up an Appalachian boy playing mountain folk music."

When Steve and Ruth married, they took off for Hawaii and Asia. Steve was part of a bluegrass group that needed a mandolin player. "So he handed me a mandolin," Ruth says, "and said 'Here. Learn how to play this, because we can't lug around a piano.'"

So she did, and Steve thinks her classical background gives her an appealing style when playing Appalachian music. "She had a different feel to playing the mandolin because she wasn't a bluegrass musician," he says. "That's why, when she finally sat down with the hammered dulcimer, she could play mountain folk music and also play classical." In turn, Ruth compliments the instrument. "The one thing that I absolutely love about the hammered dulcimer is that it lends itself to playing so many different styles of music," she says.

After several decades of playing together, Steve and Ruth have had their music evolve into the Celtic Appalachian style that's now their specialty. It took some time, however, for the hammered dulcimer to become a primary instrument in their repertoire. When the couple moved to the North Carolina mountains more than 15 years ago, Steve bought Ruth a 15/14 koa dulcimer made by Mack McKinney. "I played about 2 ½ songs on it and said 'Okay, I don't like this,'" Ruth says. "I just didn't get it because I was still thinking of the piano and trying to relate the piano to the dulcimer."

Then came the winter of '01–'02. Following three years of serious health problems and daily dialysis, Ruth had the kidney transplant she needed, followed by a long recovery period. Several things combined to increase her enthusiasm for the instrument. For starters, the sound of the instrument had always appealed to her. Plus, she remembered her previous attempts. "I've never been one to

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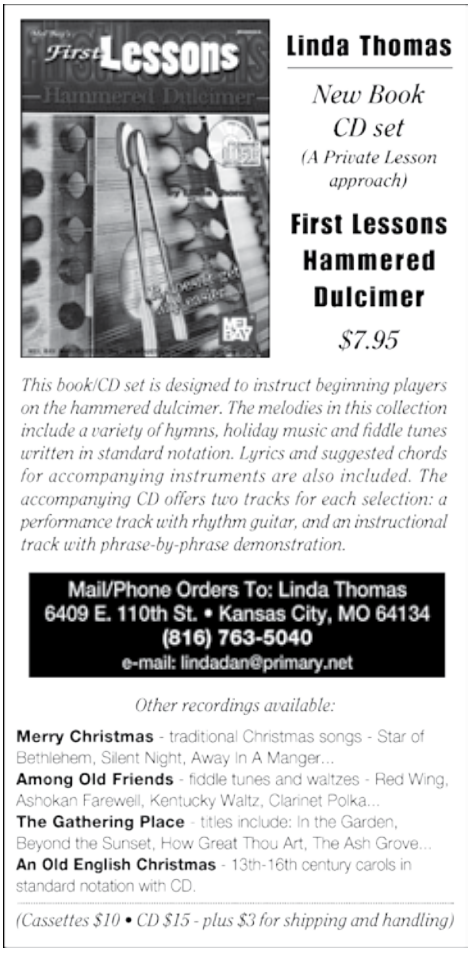
let something defeat me, especially musically," she says. Plus, she had a request from a flutist to perform together in a concert, and Ruth had two months to learn a couple of songs. That got her started.

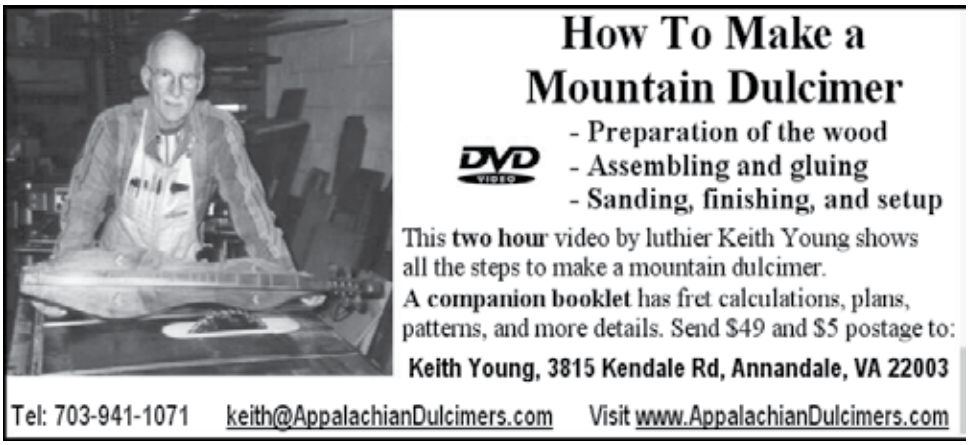
"There was something really magical about that winter," she says. "I had a lot of time to play the instrument. I was healing physically and the instrument became part of that."

Would it be hokey to describe the dulcimer as a key to her rehabilitation? "No, I think it really was," she says, "because as my new healthy life was emerging, there was a renewed method of getting the music out that had been bottled up inside me for so many years."

Steve thinks the time Ruth spent on the hammered dulcimer was just what the doctor ordered, so to speak. "I think the hammered dulcimer is something you have to spend a lot of time with," he says. "It's very intricate. It's not as though she's playing a lot of scales. It's just getting to know her instrument and where it can go and what it can do. The more she plays it, the more creative she becomes on it." As Ruth's interest in playing increased, so did her commitment to more versatile instruments. Mack McKinney made her a 17/17/7 instrument when Steve and Ruth began performing more, and then Ruth obtained a 4 ½-octave Grand Concert Master from Jerry Read Smith. When Ruth wants a more portable instrument for jam sessions or workshops, she'll take along her Traveler, built by Rick Thum. Next up will be another Jerry Read Smith creation, a five-octave instrument with dampers.

In 2005, Ruth's dulcimer and Steve's Martin guitars were primary instruments on their CD titled *An Appalachian Aire*, described as a blend of Celtic, Classical and Appalachian music. Steve produced the album in their cabin studio in the hills of western North Carolina using the same





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skills needed in his full-time job teaching audio production at Appalachian State University. The song on the CD they are perhaps most proud of is the title cut, which was written by Ruth in a somewhat reverse order. Steve came up with the CD title and Ruth was then given the mission of writing a song that fit the title. One minor problem – although Ruth had been playing music for most of her life, she had never written music.

Ruth says *An Appalachian Aire* came into her head at the end of an exhausting day of recording. "I was ready to throw the instrument into the creek and give up," she says. "I sat down at about 11 at night ready to turn on the TV and space out, and all of a sudden the beginning notes came into my head. So I ran upstairs and started diddling around. I finished the song the next day."

Ruth has since written several more songs which will be included on Steve and Ruth's next project, a CD titled *Dancin Cross the Strings* they hope to release this summer. "Writing music is all so new to me," Ruth says. "It's really exciting and a lot of fun. I've been a musician my whole life but this is the first time I've actually had music come out of me, something brand new. That's an amazing thing. It's pretty cool."

One of Steve and Ruth's current objectives is to find national representation and expand their concert performances, even though they're already busy booking weddings and selling their music through their website (www.steveandruth.com). They hope the success of *Dancin Cross the Strings* matches that of *An Appalachian Aire*, which was selected by NPR's "All Songs Considered" and is played on XM Radio. In fact, XM included the CD for three weeks in '06 on its "Best This Week" list, which makes recommendations of CD's across all genres.

Sometimes, Steve and Ruth find out from strangers about the success of *An Appalachian Aire*. Several people, when ordering CD's from CD Baby, have included notes telling Steve and Ruth where they first heard the music. That's where, for example, the two learned their music was on XM and is being played by at least one airline. Steve says finding out such things makes him think of Mac Davis once saying he knew he'd made it as a songwriter when he was in a hotel and walked into a public bathroom, where the fellow standing next to him was whistling one of his songs.

So is something like that a goal for Steve and Ruth? "No. It's not one of mine!," Ruth says. DPN

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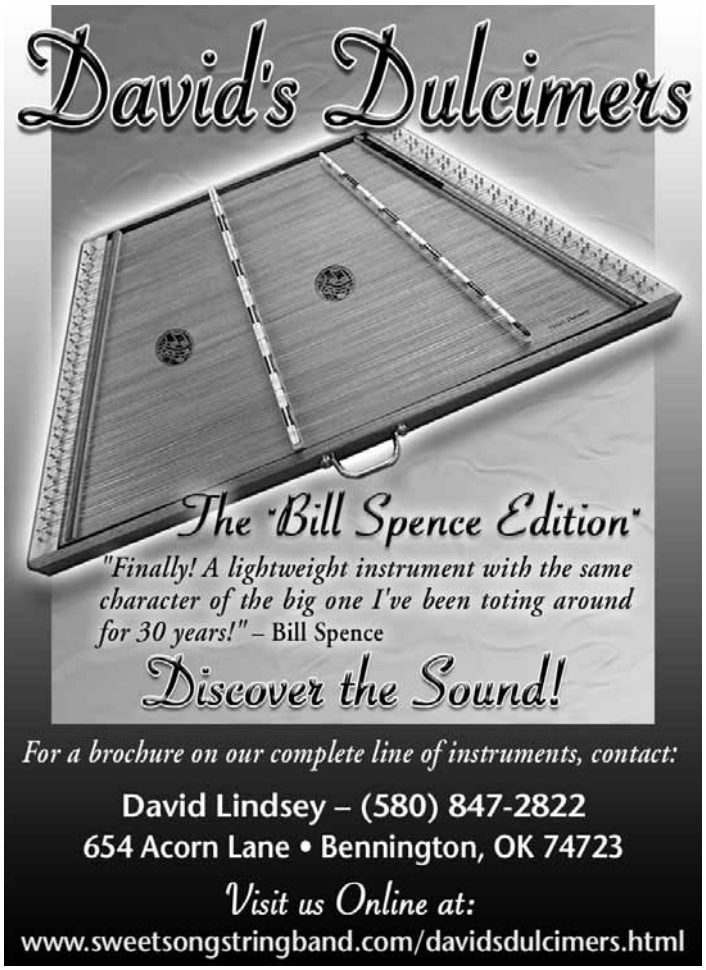

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RESTORATION

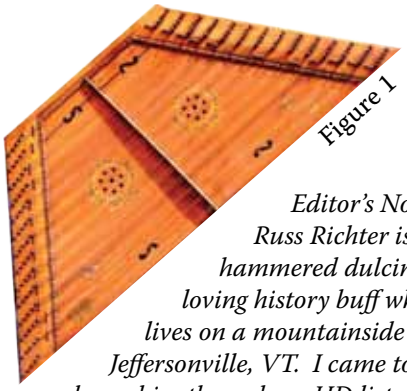

Figure 1

Editor's Note: Russ Richter is a hammered dulcimer loving history buff who lives on a mountainside in Jeffersonville, VT. I came to know him through an HD list post he sent out to anyone interested in tracking his progress on restoring an instrument built around the turn of the last century. From our first conversations, it became obvious that Russ was willing to do whatever it took to give this relic its voice back. For more on this story go to www.dpnews.com and download the podcast, "Restoration." - Dan

Russ Richter

The subject of this restoration is a 14 course hammered dulcimer made by the Stroehlein company in 1911 (fig.1). Russ found it for sale through www.craigslist.com. The instrument was in no way playable and most of the glue joints had failed years ago. Russ relied heavily on advice from Nick Blanton and Paul Gifford as he patiently began disassembly.

Over a period of several days, he used simple wedges to ease apart all that was left of the failing glue joints. The sum of the parts is shown in Figure 3.

While cleaning old glue from the back side of the soundboard he found the manufacturer's signature (Fig. 5). "I was shocked," he says.

"Finding that signature was like discovering that it had a life . . .

and I was the first guy to see this since the early 1900s."

The inscription read:

Joseph Stroehlein
1072 Myrtle Avenue
B'klyn, NY
May 5, 1911

Figure 2

Figure 3

The pin blocks were glued and doweled to the back. Most of the dowels remained attached to the back when the two were separated. The top of the soundboard was flush with the top of the pin blocks and was supported at the edges by a brace (Fig. 6) against which the pin blocks also rested.

Russ had to drill out and replace the pegs that joined the top and bottom rails to the pin blocks. (Figs. 6 and 7)

Figure 4

Figures 8, 9 and 13 show the decals that are in relatively good shape despite bearing the weight of nearly a hundred years of dust.

To preserved the decals, Russ chose to carefully clean, rather than refinish the top.

The early 1900's were apparently a high point in hammered dulcimer popularity with at least two other commercial builders in Brooklyn. In addition to Stroehlein, The Renn company and Stonitsch company were each started by Eastern European immigrants who came to the US in the late 1800's. It is easy to confuse a Stonitsch and Stroehlein instrument, as they both used the same sound hole decal (Fig. 8). No one knows whether they brought their building supplies with them when they immigrated, or whether they purchased parts from the same vendors.

"I was surprised to learn the double coin decal (Fig. 9) on the lower left hand side of the soundboard was a bogus marketing gimmick," Russ said. "It is actually a seal signifying a craftsman had won an award for great craftsmanship at the world's fair. There is no evidence that

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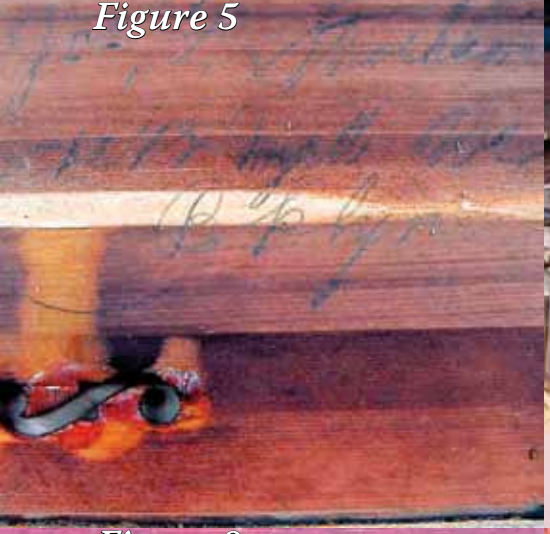

Figure 5

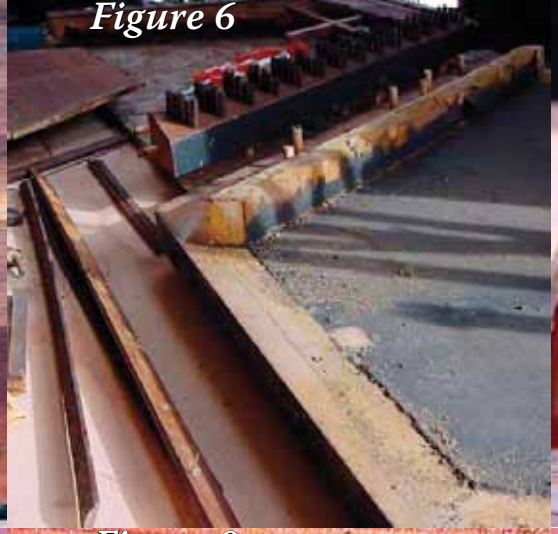

Figure 6

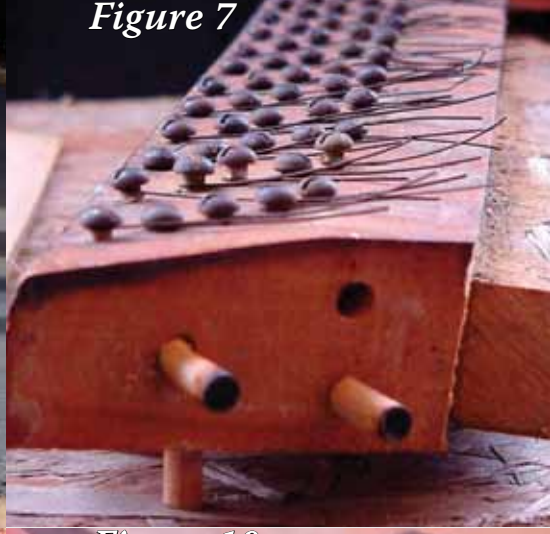

Figure 7

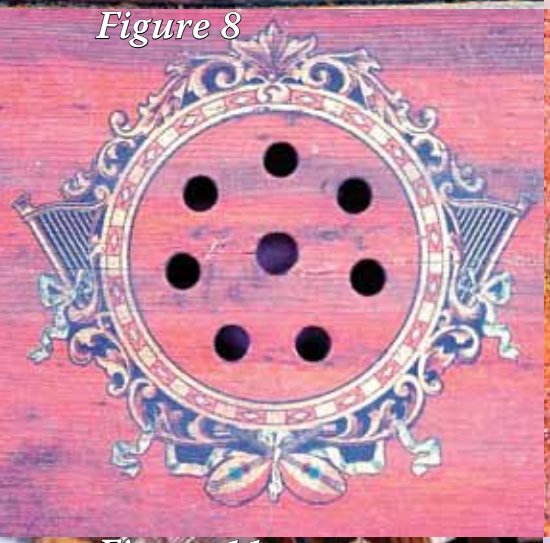

Figure 8

Figure 9

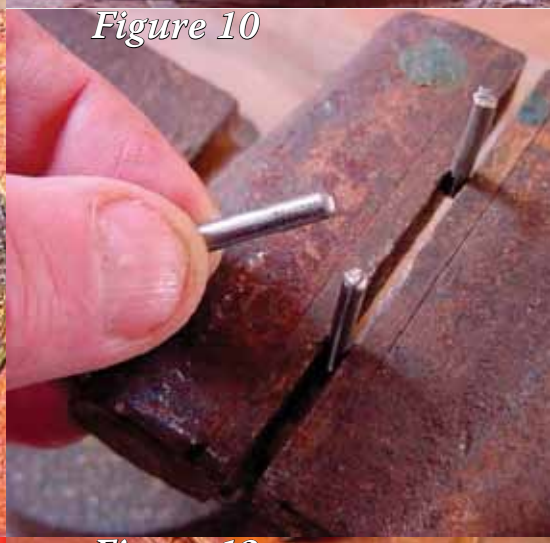

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14

Figure 15

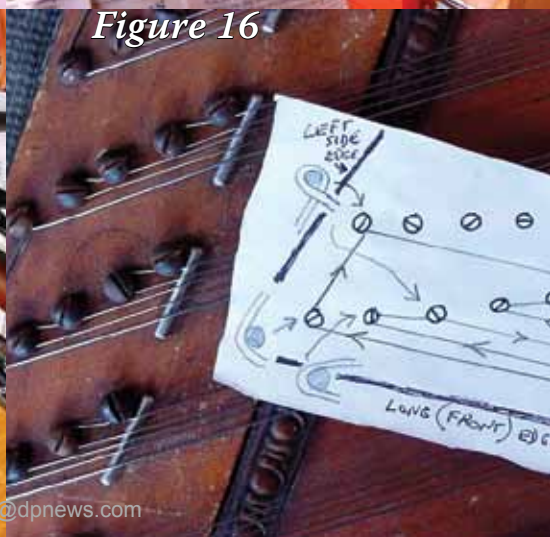

Figure 16

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the builder ever won such an award and the decals were apparently available for purchase. They served as sort of a Good Housekeeping seal of approval."

Russ discovered another piece of evidence that points to the European ancestry of this instrument. In Figure 10, he holds what looks like a hitch pin from a modern hammered dulcimer. On the Stroehlein, these served as individual side rails (see also Fig. 4). Quite a few of these were missing, so he went to a local machine shop for replacement steel. There he learned the guages were metric, which would have been unusual if the parts had come from the United States. The one he is holding is the original, and the two in the vice are the ones he's rounding off the ends to make the replacements.

Figure 11 is the beginning of the rebuild. The soundboard back was supported with a series of glued on ribs. Russ discovered they were not at 90 degree angles and appeared to have been placed with little attention to precision. Without knowing whether correcting the inprecision would cause problems on reassembly, and because he wanted the instrument to be as close to the original as possible, he carefully used the old glue lines to restore the old bracing back in its original non-parallel position.

The vertical brace was notched so that all the bracing lay flat on the back of the instrument.

It was apparent that there hadn't been a lot of attention to perfection within the original construction. Russ says, "there was so much glue on the inside, it gave me the feeling they were thinking, *Build them and sell them as quickly as possible*." He said he was pleasantly surprised that they'd taken time to taper the bridge from bottom to top.

The zither pins (Fig. 12) are large, like piano tuning pins. Russ was able to find tuning wrenches and Schaff piano wire on Ebay. "I had people suggest I polish the zither pins, but I opted to keep them rustic. I found it was very important to guide the strings downward as they wrapped around the pins, so they hold pressure on the steel rods which serve as side rails."

The moulding that hides where the soundboard meets the pin block appears to be a stock moulding, readily available at the time and used on furniture (Fig. 13).

"I was generous with the glue, just like the original builders, and was a little apprehensive when it came to fitting it all back together. I ended up spending more on clamps than I did on the instrument. It all seemd to go together without a lot of force, but didn't seem like it was going to line up properly. Then, all of a sudden, everything just popped into place."

Russ used a micrometer and determined that the guages of the old wires were 14 and 10. He took Nick Blanton's advice and used lighter guages of 13 and 8 for restringing. "I used a wiring diagram I made from the original (Fig. 16). The wiring was funky and I was aided by a tuning chart from that period supplied by Paul Gifford. Paul's tuning chart was ,however, not in very good shape, and illegible in the upper courses."

As of press time for DPN, all the strings are back on and Russ is slowly, over a matter of days rather than hours, pulling it up to pitch. He says it is holding pitch and all the glue joints appear to be stable. When it is completely tuned, Russ plans to record it and DPN will share this unique instrument's voice with a downloadable file at www.dpnews.com. for all who care to listen. DPN

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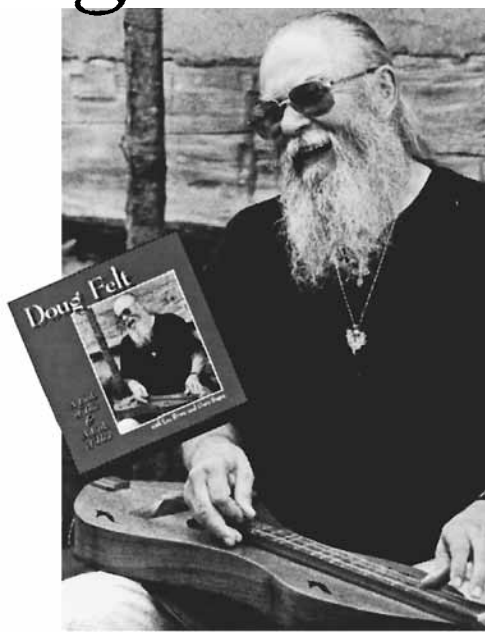

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by Angie Landrum

Dulcimer Players News and EverythingDulcimer.com have unveiled a user-friendly system for posting and retrieving event and festival information.

Here's how it works.

Go to:
www.everythingdulcimer.com

At the top of the page you'll find separate *Festival* and *Event* tabs. *Events* are things like concerts, jams, and mini-workshops. The *Festival* tab is for dulcimer festivals only.

Click the tab of your choice and you'll be taken to a list view which is sortable by date, name, city or state. You'll also find links to creating new entries, or modifying current ones.

When creating a new entry, you'll first be asked to choose a username and password. Then, simply fill out the form (Fig.1), click *submit*, and your information will be automatically emailed to Dulcimer Players News for verification. This step assures that DPN has accurate information for the magazine listing and gives us a chance to guard against spam. We will also notify you if any vital information is missing. Once it has been posted, you will be able to make changes immediately using your username and password.

If you're a festival organizer, but don't have access to the internet, all is not lost! You can still call or write with your event information and we'll enter it for you.

Use the sample form in Figure 1 as a guide, then send your event or festival information to:

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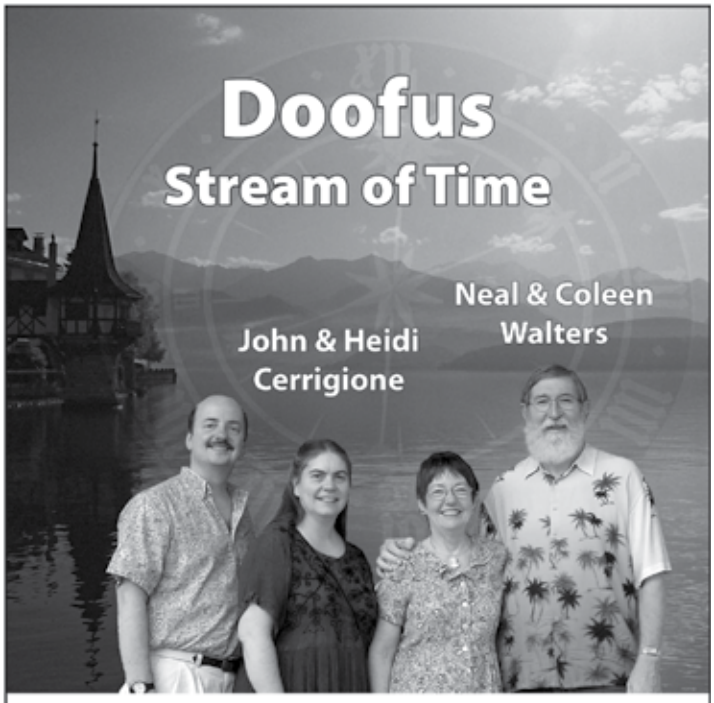

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Everything Dulcimer Festival Guide
May - September 2007

Dulcimer Players News

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5/4-5/6	Central Ohio Folk Festival Columbus, OH	Battelle-Darby Creek Metro Park **OH**	www.cfms-inc.org/central_ohio_folk_festival.htm		Nancy Cline Bailey 614-267-4128
5/4-5/6	27th Annual Spring Dulcimer Festival	Cambridge Center for Adult Education **MA**	www.jonweinberg.com/dulcifest	PO Box 9113, Cambridge, MA 02238-9113	617-547-6789
5/4-5/6	3rd Annual Dulcisisters Spring Social	Hunters Friend Resort **MO**	www.musicmountaindulcimers.com mustioncompany@aol.com	118 Myrtle Lane, Branson, MO, 65616	Cindy Mustion
5/5	Southern Appalachian Dulcimer Festival	Tannehill Ironworks Historical State Park **AL**	raangus@bellsouth.net	2069 Lakeview Lane, Birmingham AL 35244	Rob Angus 205-987-7976
5/5	Dulcimer Day in Duluth	First United Methodist "Coppertop" Church, **NC**	www.dulcimersinduluth.com wendyupnorth@yahoo.com	4005 Mcculloch St. Duluth, MN 55804	Wendy Grethen 218-525-5098
5/5-5/6	9th Annual Olde Tyme Music Festival	Hendersonville **NC**	www.historichendersonville.com	200 Sweet Lane, Hendersonville, NC 28792	Jan Hranek 828-692-8588
5/18	Dulcimer Days	Coshocton Lake Park Pavilion **OH**	www.roscoevillage.com rvfestivals@roscoevillage.com	381 Hill Street Coshocton, OH 43812	Gay Crilow or Dixie Wyler 800-877-1830
5/18-5/19	Jubilee of Acoustic Music	Longview Comm. College Lee's Summit, MO	jam@kcnet.com	1104 N. Prairie Lane Raymore, MO 64083	Michael Connelly 816-331-5728
5/19	Blue River Folk Music Festival	Town and Country Christian Church **IN**	http://www.blueriverfolkfest.com	500 Saraina Road, Box 140 Shelbyville, IN 46176	Renee Moore 317-392-3608
5/25	Folk College with Simple Gifts	Juniata College Huntingdon, **PA**	www.simplegiftsmusic.com/folkcollege/		Huntingdon Co. Arts Council 814/643-6220
5/25-5/27	Dulcimore Festival	BSA Camp Mckinley **OH**	dulcimore.org bill@dulcimore.org	984 Homewood Avenue Salem, OH 44460	Bill Schilling 330-332-4420
6/1-6/2	Yellowbanks Dulcimer Festival	English Park Owensboro, **KY**	yellowbanks@bellsouth.net	4113 Mason Wood Lane Owensboro, KY 42303	Thelma Newman 270-684-1631
6/9	PattyFest 2007 Old-Time Music Festival	Morgantown, **WV**	www.pattyfest.org pattyfest@frontiernet.net		304-864-0105
6/9-6/10	Gebhard Woods Dulcimer Festival	Gebhard Woods State Park Morris **IL**	www.gwdf.org	PO Box 801 Morris, IL 60450-0801	708-331-6875
6/11-6/12	Folk Music at Weatherbury Farm	Weatherbury Farm **PA**	www.folkmusic.weatherburyfarm.com info@weatherburyfarm.com	1061 Sugar Run Road Avella, PA 15312	Marcy Tudor 724-587-3763
6/23-6/29	The 26th Northeast Dulcimer Symposium	Blue Mountain Lake, **NY**	www.nedulcimer.org NDS_Director@nedulcimer.org	PO Box 358 Annapolis Junction, MA 20701-0358	

Date	Festival	Event Location	Electronic	Contact Address	Contact
6/24-6/29	Western Carolina University Mountain Dulcimer Week	Western Carolina University **NC**	edoutreach.wcu.edu/dulcimer	138 Outreach Center, Cullowhee, NC 28723	Bobby Hensley 828-227-7397
6/24-6/29	Kentucky Music Week	Days Inn, Bardstown, **KY**	www.kentuckymusicweek.com	P.O. Box 86, Bardstown, KY 40004	Nancy Barker 502-348-5237
6/27-7/1	3rd Annual HCAMP	Schreiner University Kerrville, **TX**	www.hcamp.org	4000 Riverside Drive Kerrville, TX 78028	Bob Miller 830-896-5711
7/1-7/6 7/8-7/13	Common Ground on the Hill Traditions Weeks	McDaniel College Westminster, **MD**	www.commongroundonthehill.org	2 College Hill Westminster, MD 21157	410-857-2771
7/8-7/14	The Swannanoa Gathering	Warren Wilson College Asheville, **NC**	www.swangathering.com gathering@warren-wilson.edu	PO Box 9000 Asheville, NC 28815-9000	828-298-3434
7/19-7/22	ODPC Funfest	The Fairgrounds Evart, **MI**	www.dulcimers.com sharon@dulcimers.com		Sharon Skaryd
7/22-7/27	Heritage Dulcimer Camp	Parkville, **MO**	www.heritagedulcimercamp.org slndmyr@carrollsweb.com	405 Court Ellsworth, KS 67439	Sharon Lindenmeyer 785-472-4285
7/22-7/27	Irish Week	Augusta Heritage Center Davis & Elkins College **WV**	www.augustaheritage.com	100 Campus Drive Elkins, WV 26241	800/624-3157
7/22-7/28	Dulcimer Celebration Week	John C. Campbell Folk School **NC**	www.folkschool.org	One Folk School Road Brasstown, NC 28902	1-800-FOLK-SCH
7/27-7/29	Cranberry Dulcimer and Autoharp Gathering	Unitarian Univeralist Church Binghamton, **NY**	www.cranberrydulcimer.com e.ware@ieee.org	1259 Fowler Place Binghamton, NY 13903	Ed Ware 607-669-4653
7/29-8/3	Dulcimer Week in the Shenandoah Valley	Henkel Hall , Shenandoah University **VA**	www.su.edu/cont-ed jmille3@su.edu		540-665-5442
8/10-8/11	Little Rock Dulcimer Getaway	Pulaski Heights Baptist Church **AR**	www.arkansasdulcimersociety.com	114 E. French Oaks Cir. The Woodlands, TX 77382	Bob Bruce 281-292-4594
8/10-8/12	Heart of the Alleghenies Folk Music Festival	University of Pittsburgh at Bradford **NY**	www.hotafest.org	PO Box 477 Westfield, NY 14787	Lucinda Durkee 716-676-2260
8/17-8/19	Gateway Dulcimer Music Festival	Shrine of the Lady of the Snows, Belleville, **IL**	www.gatewaydulcimer.org		618-651-8271
8/23-8/26	Midland Dulcimer Festival	Midland County Fairgrounds, **MI**	www.folkmusicsociety.org/festival.html		Sharon Skaryd
8/24-8/25	Dulcimer Duets at the Dixie	The Dixie Carter Performing Arts Center **TN**	www.dixiepac.net congermusic@aol.com	191 Court Square Huntingdon, TN 38344	Larry & Elaine Conger 731-986-2100
9/14-916	Upper Potomac Fall Dulcimer Fest	Hilltop House Hotel Harpers Ferry, **WV**	www.dulcimerfest.org updf@earthlink.net		Joanie Blanton 304-263-2531
10/13	Strum N Along Autumn Dulcimer Day	Pilgrim Congregational Church Leominster, **MA**	strumnalong@yahoo.com		Cynthia Crosson-Harrington 978-724-3472
10/13	The 2nd Annual Red Hill Mini-Fest	Sumner United Methodist Church Sumner, **IL**	rhdulcimers@yahoo.com jerrypacholski@verizon.net	508 20th Street Lawrenceville, IL 62439	Jerry Pacholski 618-943-5610

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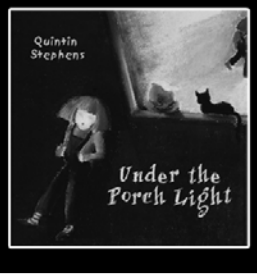

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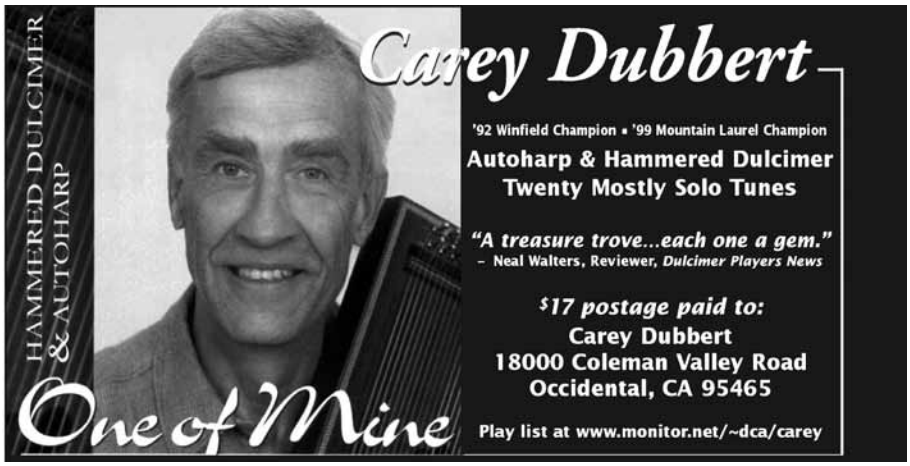

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